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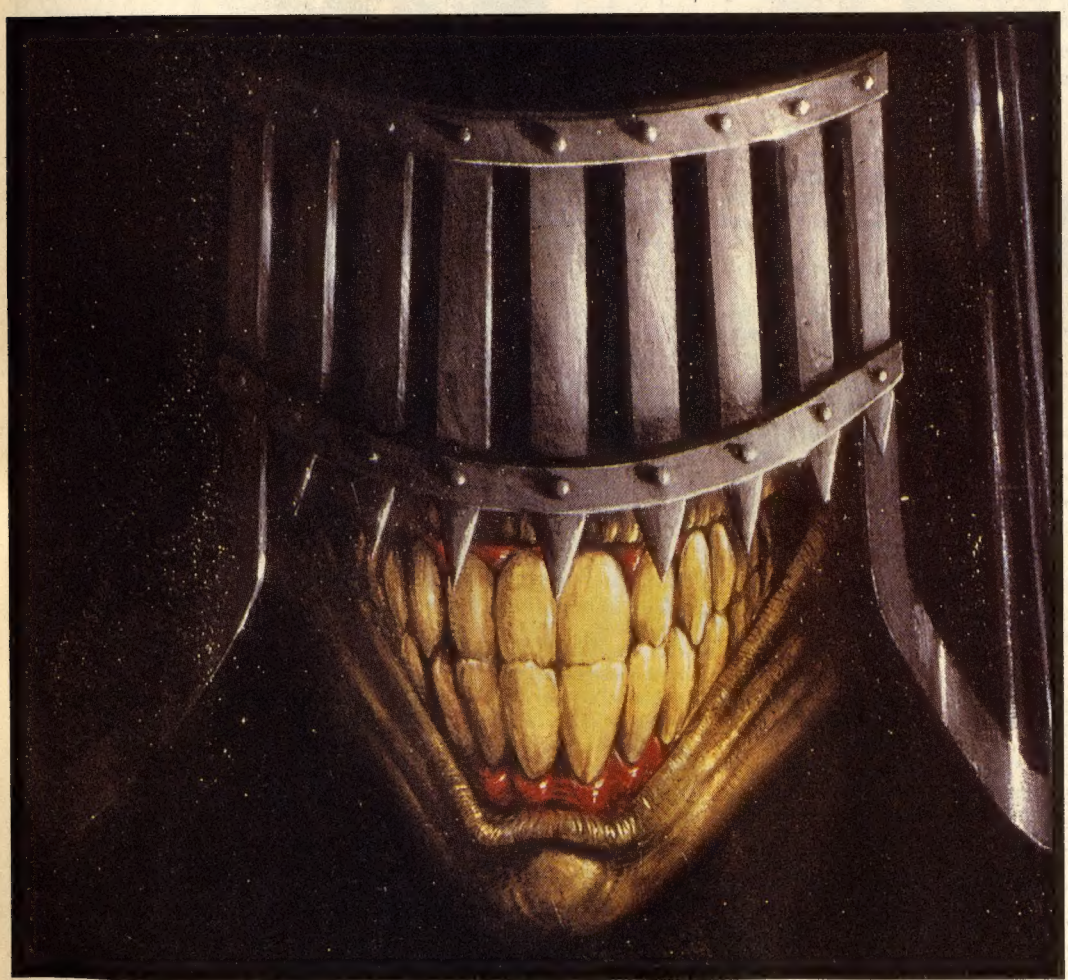
Comics INTERNATIONAL

Issue 24 September 1992 edition The Comics Industry Monthly 80 pages 50p / $1.50

New imprint for Sandman, Doom Patrol, Shade and Hellblazer

DC launches Vertigo: over 20 new titles



Representing a major push into the national book and news trade for graphic novels, Reed International's subsidiary Mandarin Books has entered into a three-year agreement with Fleetway Editions to produce licensed compilations of the most popular comic strips from the 2000AD group. With a major point of sale promotional campaign, their first six full colour titles will be launched in October this year. The titles are: ***Young Death*** *(pictured above),* ***Judge Dredd: Raptaur, ABC Warriors, Judge Dredd: Democracy Now, Killing Time*** *and a new edition of the best-selling Dredd v Batman title,* ***Judgement on Gotham****.*

IN THE WAKE of its failed Impact super-hero imprint, DC Comics is about to launch an expanded line of adult titles.

While market leader Marvel continues to enlarge its mainstream line-up, DC is consolidating its existing *mature readers* titles, including **Sandman, Shade, Doom Patrol, Hellblazer, Animal Man** and **Swamp Thing**, and adding almost two dozen new projects under the *Vertigo* publishing imprint.

Consolidation or isolation?

When DC previously attempted to abate trade and parental confusion between its all-age and mature reader titles by introducing a form of cover labelling similar to films and videos, several creators considered it restrictive.

DC's new attempt, giving all Vertigo titles a similar overall design in addition to the DC logo, has been welcomed by both creators and the trade.

With new titles set to include creator-owned projects and incorporate the recently improved DC creator contract, Vertigo group editor Karen Berger commented, "We've always tried, editorially, to shake up the status quo; now we have the freedom to take it even further."

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NEWS america

The future of Doom

FOLLOWING the September release of **Spider-Man 2099** and October's **Ravage 2099**, Marvel is to continue its "tomorrow universe" series expansion with **Doom 2099** launching in November.

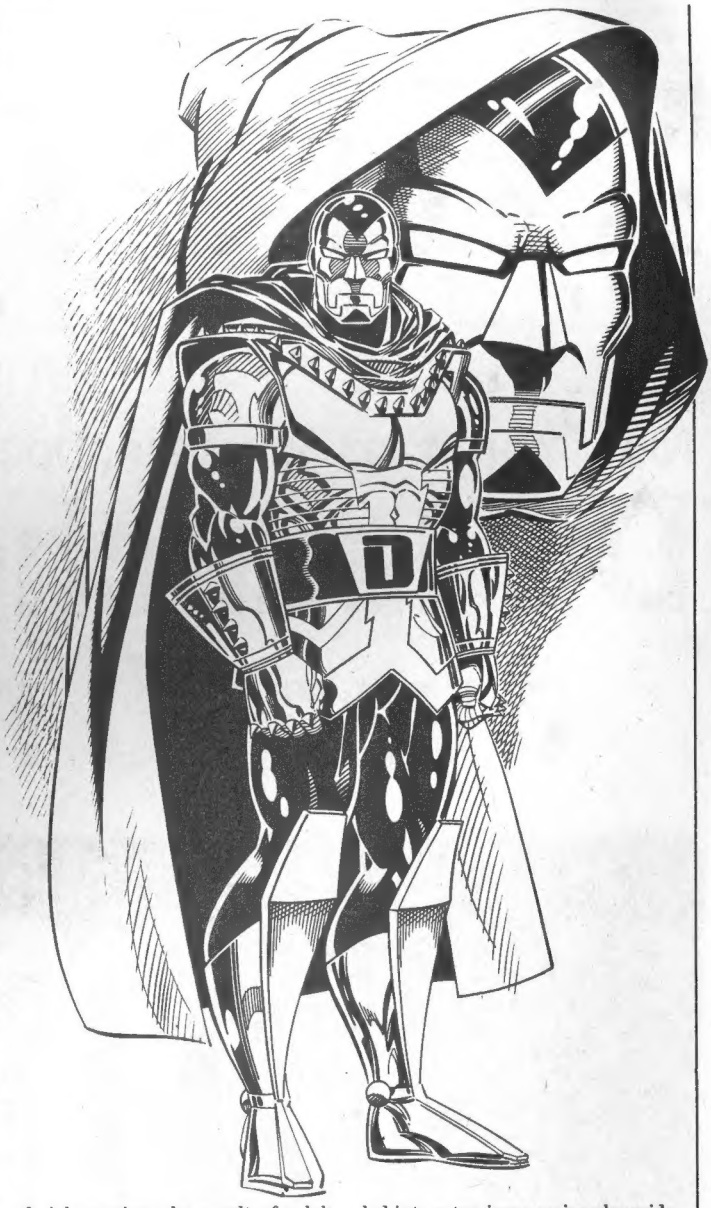
While both the future Spider-Man and new character Ravage have no direct link with 20th century Marvel super-heroes, it is hinted that the future Doom could be the same Victor von Doom who is the nemesis of the Fantastic Four over one hundred years earlier. But Marvel only offers a tantalising "could be" about the man behind the mask's possible identity.

Scripts on the new monthly, which launches with a foil-stamped cover, are provided by Howard Chaykin's long-time writing partner John Francis Moore, who was also partially responsible for the recent tv **Flash** scripts.

Pencil and ink artwork is by Pat Broderick, best known for his work on **Alpha Flight**, DC's **Green Lantern** and his 1979 post-Starlin **Captain Marvel** issues (#55-62).

Moore's story begins with Doom returning to his homeland of Latveria. But instead of the idyllic nation he remembers, it is now a criminal community run by Tiger Wylde, a fierce and feral pretender to Doom's throne.

Against the futuristic cyberpunk world of virtual reality, Doom soon finds his powers may be sadly lacking.



Fact File: Doctor Doom

Created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby as an old college friend turned foe of Fantastic Four leader Reed Richards, Victor von Doom first appeared in the 1962 **Fantastic Four** issue 5.

Borrowing heavily from classic literature, the iron-masked scientific genius blamed Richards for his facial scarring, the result of a lab experiment gone awry. But, as Jack Kirby once explained to **Comics International** editor Dez Skinn after leaving the strip, he had always wanted to produce the story revealing Doom's "scarred" face as having only a minute blemish, showing the character's true enemy to be -- not Reed Richards -- but his own vanity.

An inspiration for **Star Wars'** Darth Vader, Doctor Doom proved to be Marvel's most popular villain, though he never acquired his own title. Until now, his nearest has been a full-length solo-strip with full cover logo in the giant sized 1969 **Marvel Super-Heroes #20** which led into a ten issue series alongside a Ka-Zar strip in the 1970 title **Astonishing Tales**, initially drawn by Jack Kirby and Wally Wood.

While it is currently rumoured that Marvel may be paving the way for a new contemporary series starring Doctor Doom, November will not only be the launch month for **Doom 2099**, but also for the company's reprinting of von Doom's first ever appearance as its latest *Marvel Milestone* edition.

Doom 2099, priced $1.75, ships to the UK's specialist shops on November 17, while the origination-free reprint of **Fantastic Four #5** will carry the higher price of $2.95 and ship one week later. ●

New readers: begin here

Comics International *is a monthly industry trade newspaper devoted to the comics medium. As such, it provides details of forthcoming UK and US comics and related items.*

Certain products mentioned are not available through regular newsstand outlets, but only from the 'direct sale' comics specialist retailers and mail order companies. In our news section, these comics are noted. Details of specialist outlets are advertised throughout the magazine, and a listing of the major specialist shops in Britain is given in our Retail Index.

Shipping dates *mentioned for North American titles are the dates copies leave their printers to be air-freighted to distributors for direct sale outlets approximately one week later. These dates and titles do not relate to newsstand on sale dates or titles.*

The Marvel and DC titles on general national distribution are on sale in the UK approximately two to three months after the air-freighted copies can be bought through specialist shops and mail order companies dealing with 'advance imports'. Because of the additional shipping costs incurred, these copies will be sold at a higher price than the UK price printed on their covers.

American dollar prices *are listed for US titles with most UK comic shops converting at the rate of 70p = $1.*

For full details concerning advertisers displaying the ***CoBRA Mail Order Protection*** *symbol,* *see page 78.*

Black Orchid, Kid Eternity and the original Sandman return

DC launches Vertigo as expansion line for mature reader titles

DRAMATICALLY increasing its commitment to the growing mature reader audience, DC is consolidating its existing line together with a range of new products under the Vertigo imprint.

Vertigo titles will feature a striking overall design signalling their "offbeat sensibility", as DC's Marco Palmieri describes it, as well as distinguishing them from mainstream, all-age DC comics.

Carrying both the DC and Vertigo symbols, existing mature reader titles will appear under the new imprint, including **Sandman, Hellblazer, Doom Patrol, Animal Man, Swamp Thing** and **Shade, the Changing Man**.

In addition, the recently acquired projects which were to appear under the now cancelled Disney Touchmark imprint will complement the new line.

As group editor, Karen Berger is overseeing the new mature/horror line, continuing the rapport she first established primarily with British authors on **Swamp Thing, Hellblazer, Animal Man, Sandman, Shade** and **Batman: Arkham Asylum**.

Editors on the titles will be Art Young (who had originally developed the Touchmark projects for Disney), Stuart Moore and Tom Peyer.

The first new Vertigo titles are scheduled for January 1993 release:

● **Enigma**, 8 issues by Peter (**Shade**) Milligan and Duncan (**Kid Eternity**) Fegredo. The story tells of "an intellectual Elephant Man", who becomes an existentialist superhero and the catalyst for change in a young man's empty life.

● **Death: The High Cost of Living** is the much anticipated three issue mini-series by **Sandman**'s Neil Gaiman and **Shade** artists Chris Bachalo and Mark Pennington. Behind painted covers by Dave McKean, the story does not star a grim and hooded figure wielding a razor-sharp scythe. Instead Death (the sister of Sandman) more closely resembles a slender 16-year old gothic punk. But the Egyptian-eyed girl with the impish smile is not what she appears. In this series Death explores the streets of New York along with the unfamiliar boundaries of mortality as we learn that once every one hundred years Death becomes mortal for a day.

Left: ***Sandman Mystery Theatre*** *artwork by Guy Davis, best known as writer-artist of Caliber Press's* ***Baker Street****. Above: Chris Bachalo's disarming visualisation of Death, from the* ***Death: The High Cost of Living*** *mini-series to be launched in January.*

The following three months will see the release of four new Vertigo titles:

● **Sandman Mystery Theatre** by Matt Wagner and Guy Davis. This continuing new format monthly tells of Wesley Dodds, the Golden Age Sandman who is haunted by his dreams. In the New York of the late 1930s, Wesley moves through a decadent, post-Depression America where all others ignore the dark cloud of fascism looming over Europe.

Guided by his dreams, the trenchcoat and gas-mask wearing Wesley stalks the shadowy trails of bizarre underworld criminals, such as the Tarantula, the Mist and the Phantom of the World's Fair.

● **Kid Eternity** by **Daredevil**'s Ann Nocenti and Sean Phillips revives the character recreated in last year's mini-series.

● **Sebastian O** by the *Zenith* team of Grant Morrison and Steve Yeowell is the title originally promoted by Touchmark.

● **Black Orchid** by Dick Foreman and **Wonder Woman** artist Jill Thompson will continue the unweave the mystery behind the super-heroine revived by Neil Gaiman as his first DC work.

Karen Berger says of the new imprint, "We believe the sophistication and diversity of the Vertigo material is the future of comics.

"One of our goals is to help bring more adults into comic shops."

A date has yet to be given for the changeover of continuing titles into Vertigo books.

Despite the intriguing premise behind Stefan (**Meta-4**) Petrucha's revitalization of the 1960s Joe Simon character **Brother Power, the Geek**, it is understood that the change in editorial direction has led to the cancellation of the title.

The character was last seen in as a doll elemental in Neil Gaiman's **Swamp Thing Annual 5**, and was to be revived as the Doll God's earthly servant, but possessed by the malevolent soul of a serial murderer. No official announcements have been made.

DC increases mainstream horror comics output

OUTSIDE OF its Vertigo line of titles, DC is also increasing its mainstream share of the horror comic market, reviving Deadman and The Spectre.

Deadman is to appear in a 2-issue prestige format mini-series, **Deadman: Exorcism**. A sequel to **Deadman: Love after Death**, it reunites the creative team of Mike Baron and Kelley Jones and co-stars The Phantom Stranger. Priced $4.95, the first issue ships on October 20.

Also being revived is one of DC's oldest characters, The Spectre, for a continuing new format monthly by John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake.

Though this latest version will be closest in feel to the Mike Fleischer and Jim Aparo **Adventure Comics** "fearful retribution" Spectre series, the character has had a fine pedigree since first appearing in **More Fun 52** (February 1940).

Gardner Fox and Murphy Anderson revived the golden age character (beginning in **Showcase 60**), while Neal Adams, Jerry Grandenetti and Berni Wrightson worked on his 10 issue 1967-1969 series. The following Fleischer series was considered too controversial for the 1960s (in **Adventure 432-440**) and he did not again appear in his own title until the 1987-89 disappointing 31-issue run.

The new grittier version ships on October 13 with a glow-in-the-dark cover, and is priced $1.95.

Above and left: *Tom Mandrake's visual depiction of* ***The Spectre*** *for DC's continuing new $1.75 series launching in October with a glow-in-the-dark covered $1.95 issue.*

Two top dollar hobby industries in cross-market expansion

Marvel to publish trading cards and Topps to publish comics

WHILE Marvel Comics is recognised in America as the largest comics publishing company, Topps has always been the biggest producer of trading cards.

Both industries aim primarily at the completist collector; both produce special editions -- embossed versions, foil-enhanced and special "collector sets" and, over the last year, both industries have increasingly worked together. Comic promotions often feature free trading cards to increase their market, while the one time sports-only subject matter of trading cards have found a new market by licensing comics characters.

With both hobby markets finding one of their largest growth areas is into each other's territory, the industry leaders have chosen to compete directly instead of taking on licensed product.

Topps had a virtual monopoly on trading cards (now estimated to be a $1.2 billion market) until 1983 when rival company Fleer launched its range of baseball cards, and then, in 1991, football and basketball sets.

Competitors Pro-Set moved away from their sports only start, with music and movie cards as well as a **Mad** style "Flops" humour-sports series, but with mass over-production leading to cut price dumping the company had appeared to be struggling over recent years and has recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Impel, recently renamed SkyBox, has found its biggest success through producing the licensed range of Marvel character cards, with the imminent and expensive Marvel Masterpieces due for October.

Each of this new 100 card series is painted by Joe Jusko (the Spider-Man card - enlarged - shown left). With a copyright line implying that SkyBox is acting only as the distributors for Marvel, this will be the company's last co-production following Marvel's current acquisition of Fleer at $28 per share (representing approximately $265 million).

Marvel, showing a healthy 192% increase in profits to $7.2 million for the quarter ending June 30, 1992, puts its success down to a 49% title expansion plus the added revenue from increased cover prices. Its turnover for the period increased 63% to $37.5 million, with publishing representing $33.2 million.

In its latest quarter year figures, Fleer shows a greater profit than Marvel, but a less dramatic increase, from $7.8 million to $8 million.

Taking its own trading card success into the comics market, Topps is producing its first 32 page title, **Bram Stoker's Dracula** (cover artwork below), as a 4-issue adaptation of the new Francis Ford Coppola film.

Produced by Roy Thomas, Mike Mignola and John Nyberg, each issue will be polybagged to include Dracula trading cards which will not be available elsewhere.

The mature readers only full colour title launches in October, priced $2.95 and tells how Vlad the Impaler became the lord of the vampires.

The same month Topps is releasing its 100 card **Dracula** set, with crimson foil stamping on premium card stock with full lamination. None of the comics cards will appear in the set.

If the National Enquirer were a road movie scripted by Hunter S. Thompson, directed by the Coen brothers, with a soundtrack by Guns 'n' Roses, WHITE TRASH would still piss all over it!

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Buy it or become a Neil Sedaka fan.

TUNDRA

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Pages from the two new "Elseworlds" titles. Above: the futuristic ***Robin 3000****. Below: the historical* ***Batman, the Blue, the Grey and the Bat****.*

EMPERANCE GROUP
MEETS WITH MAYOR
KEY TO THE CITY
MINE EXPLOSION
by Samuel Clemens
TERRITORIAL ENTERPRISE
MINERS CLAIM
TO SEE BAT MAN
THAT GUY'S GETTIN IN TH' WAY O' OUR BEIN' ABLE TA HIDE TH' CONTRA BAND
PUT A COUPLE GUYS ON FINDIN' OUT WHO HE IS.

DC further expands line of Bat-books

IN THE WAKE of the record-breaking success of the *Batman Returns* feature film, Warner subsidiary DC Comics continues to expand its line of Batman-related titles.

A range of new products for all ages is being prepared including standard format, new format, trade paperback and hardback graphic novel titles all to ship to specialist shops this winter.

● **Batman: Prey** trade paperback. The highly-praised 5-issue story by Doug Moench, Paul Gulacy and Terry Austin from **Legends of the Dark Knight 11-15** had already been collected by Titan Books for the UK market. DC is now publishing its own 136 page edition priced $12.95, shipping to the UK on October 13.

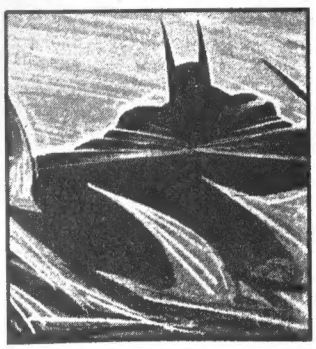
● The popular Batman *Elseworlds* series continues with two new one-shots shipping in November. **Batman: the Blue, the Grey and the Bat** has a 19th century Bruce Wayne taking on the role of the Bat-Man during the Civil War on a secret mission for President Lincoln.

Scripted by Elliott S. Maggin, art is provided by Alan Weiss and Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez, with colouring by **Lobo**'s Lovern Kindzierski.

The 64 page prestige format one-shot ships on November 17, priced $5.95.

Robin 3000 is the first non-Batman *Elseworlds* title and is a 2-issue mini-series with foil-enhanced covers produced by Byron Preiss Visual Productions. Written by Preiss, it features the artwork and colouring of P. Craig Russell and tells the story of Robin being civilization's last hope as the Batman of that era lies dead and only his young aid can stand against the threat of a group known as The Skulpt.

Priced $4.95, **Robin 3000** launches with a November 10 shipping date.



● **Batman: Birth of the Demon** is a 112 page hardback graphic novel following previous Ra's Al Ghul books, **Son of the Demon** and **Birth of the Demon**. Scripted by Bat-editor Dennis O'Neil and drawn by Norm Breyfogle, the book tells the tragic origin of Batman's most compelling adversary and ships on December 8, priced $24.95.

● **Batman: Vengeance of Bane** is a standard format one-shot by **Robin**'s Chuck Dixon with art by the unusual team of **Hawkworld**'s Graham Nolan and **The Shadow Strikes**' Eduardo Barreto. The book introduces a new major villain into the Batman mythos, Bane, the sole survivor of the Venom Experiments (see **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 16-20**).

Shipping December 8, the 64 page one-shot **Batman: Vengeance of Bane** is priced $2.50.

Related Bat-books, **Showcase 1993** starring The Catwoman, and the **Robin III** mini-series are covered on page 9 this issue.

"One thing I enjoy about a story is a rich, complicated, interwoven plot. The Dark delivers!"
-- Jim Starlin --

"The Dark is a new hero for the 90's!"
-- Alan Grant --

T·H·E DARK

ISSUE THREE

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SCOTT HANNA, DAN PANOSIAN
WITH A MARK BRIGHT & MARK FARMER COVER!

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WHAT?!?
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UKCAC92

THE UK COMIC ART CONVENTION 1992

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★ The advance admission price for the whole weekend and special convention booklet is for the fourth year running *still only* £15.
★ The advance admission price for one day and special convention booklet is £10. Your application must reach us by **Monday August 24th 1992.**
★ The cost of tickets on the door will be £20 for the whole weekend and £12.50 for a single day - so you see it pays to apply in advance.
★ **ADMISSION IS FREE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 14 YEARS OLD IF ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT OVER 18 YEARS OLD.**

Accommodation
★ Accommodation will be at a nearby halls of residence for the night of Saturday September 19th and will cost £20 (included breakfast). Applications for accommodation must reach us by **Monday August 24th 1992.**

Overnight Film Festival
★ Last year's overnight film show held at the **Scala Cinema** was a great success with both convention attendees and the general public, and we hope to repeat the event this year on **Saturday September 19th.**

Costume Parade
★ **Everyone who enters the contest wearing a proper costume will get £10 refunded! Changing rooms will be provided. The contest will be held on Saturday afternoon.** *(Please see application coupon)*

The Convention
★**In attendance at the convention will be representatives from the major comic companies including Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, Fleetway and Tundra.**
★ There will be interviews and discussions featuring the convention guests, exhibitions of artwork, quizzes, and opportunities to obtain autographs and sketches.
★ Comic dealers will be selling rare back issues in addition to the latest titles, graphic novels, posters and other comics related merchandise. There will also be many pages of original artwork for sale.
★ This year's auction proceeds will again go to worthwhile causes. Artwork from the special convention booklet will up for bidding.

Registration
★ You should receive your convention badge and registration note within two weeks of application, or sooner if you apply near the deadline.
★ IMPORTANT: If you do not receive your registration form and badge by **Friday Septeber 11th** write to us immediately, preferably including a telephone number where you can be contacted.
★ **IMPORTANT: You must enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope with your application so that we can return your badge and registration form. If you do not include a SAE your application will not be processed.**

Other Matters
★ All guests advertised on the leaflet have confirmed that they will be attending the UK Comic Art Convention 1992, and we can accept no responsibility for guests cancelling at short notice.

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JOE RUBINSTEIN MIKE MIGNOLA
TOM VEITCH EVAN DORKIN
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Confirmed British guests so far include:

DAVE GIBBONS ALAN GRANT SIMON FURMAN
GARY ERSKINE JOHN MCCREA GARTH ENNIS
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DUNCAN FEGREDO JAMIE HEWLETT
DOUGIE BRAITHWAITE ARTHUR RANSON
MARK BUCKINGHAM ANDREW WILDMAN
And many more to be announced!

REMINDERS
★ Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope so that we can return your entry badge and accomodation details.
★ **IMPORTANT: If you do not enclose a stamped self-adressed envelope, your application will not be processed.**
★ Please enclose an international reply coupon if applying from outside the UK.

Please complete, cut out (or make a copy of) and send with payment to:
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Character: .....

By filling in this form you are not in any way obliged to enter the contest if you change your mind. You can also enter the contest even if you don't fill this form in. Your £10 will be refunded at the convention.

THIS MUST REACH US BY MONDAY AUGUST 24 1992

Tick box(s)

Please send me ..... ticket(s) at £15 each (Admission for both days and UKCAC92 booklet) ☐

Please send me ..... ticket(s) at £10 each (Admission for one day and UKCAC92 booklet) **Sat** ☐ **Sun** ☐

I require ..... room(s) at £20 each for the night of Saturday, September 19th 1992

I enclose a cheque or postal order made payable to **Rusty Staples Ltd** for the amount of: £.....

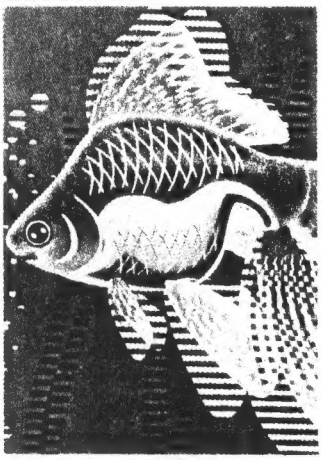
Tick this box if you don't want to receive any comics related information through the post ☐

DC's latest gimmick cover

ROBIN III: Cry of the Huntress is a 6-issue fortnightly series shipping from DC Comics in November.

Co-starring The Huntress and the KGBeast, the title will have two editions; the regular $1.25 newsstand version, and the special *movement-enhanced* cover version, priced $2.50, exclusively for the direct sale market.

Movement-enhancement is achieved by a simple device as illustrated below.



In the above visual, while there is only one drawing of the fish's body, there are two versions of its fins in different positions. Each is cut across by wide horizontal lines and alternating, so that when one fin position is visible, the horizontally adjacent second fin position is obscured by a thick black line.

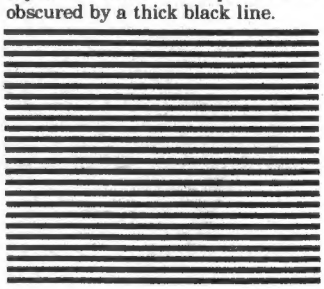


Figure two represents a sheet of clear plastic film, which has opaque thick black horizontal lines on it.

When the fish visual is placed behind the alternating clear-black-clear-black lines on figure two, only one set of fin positions of the fish can be seen.

As the fish drawing is moved slowly, the first fin positions are covered by the black lines and the second fin positions can be seen.

The simple up and down motion of the illustration behind the film creates an illusion of movement.

The **Robin III** Collector's Edition, by the regular team of Dixon, Lyle and Smith, will be polybagged and have covers which feature this gimmick in an reversible insert, so two different visuals can be seen through the film to be moving when slowly pulled up or down.

While DC may consider this to be *"an entirely new movement-enhanced technology"*, it is difficult to consider it more than a regular comic with a $1.25 child's gimmick attached. As such, it could prove ill-judged when aimed at the supposedly more mature direct sale audience.

Superman "Doomsday" serial leads into "Funeral for a Friend"

WHILE the mass media has widely publicised DC's forthcoming "Death of Superman" plotline, many rumours have been heard within the comics industry concerning the reason behind the serial and its subsequent publicity.

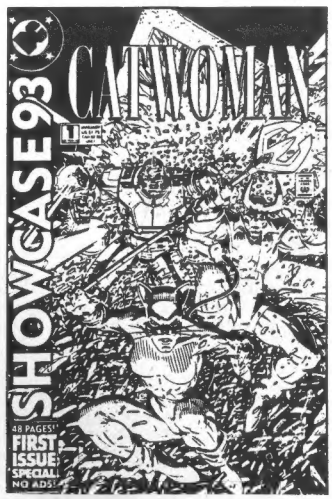
With the creative line-up on the titles almost certain to change following poor sales on the latest addition, **Superman: Man of Steel**, the seven-part crossover *Doomsday* story can also be interpreted as a sales booster.

Beyond the finale to *Doomsday* (told entirely in splash pages in the November 10 shipping **Superman 75**), subsequent issues of **Justice League America**, **Adventures of Superman**, **Action**, **Superman Man of Steel** and **Superman** will feature the nine part *Funeral for a Friend* serial across their December and January issues.

It is believed that DC is keeping the central character out of the Superman stories for a period of several months in an attempt to renew interest in the character's titles both within and outside of the comics market.

The death issue is to be commemorated by DC Comics' merchandising of a November 10 shipping $14.95 black t-shirt with the familiar S chest emblem seeming to bleed.

Superman 70 will also be available with different cover art as a direct market $2.50 Collector's Edition, polybagged, and complete with a special poster and mourning armband. As every newspaper already knows, Death Sells.



Showcase 93, a 12-issue 48-page $1.95 series, is to star Catwoman (Moench & Hannigan) backed in issue one by Blue Devil and Cyborg. It ships on November 24th.

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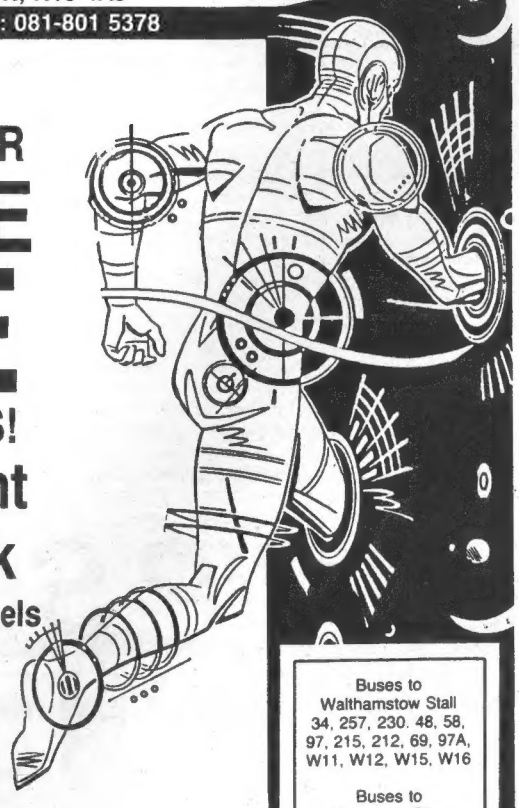

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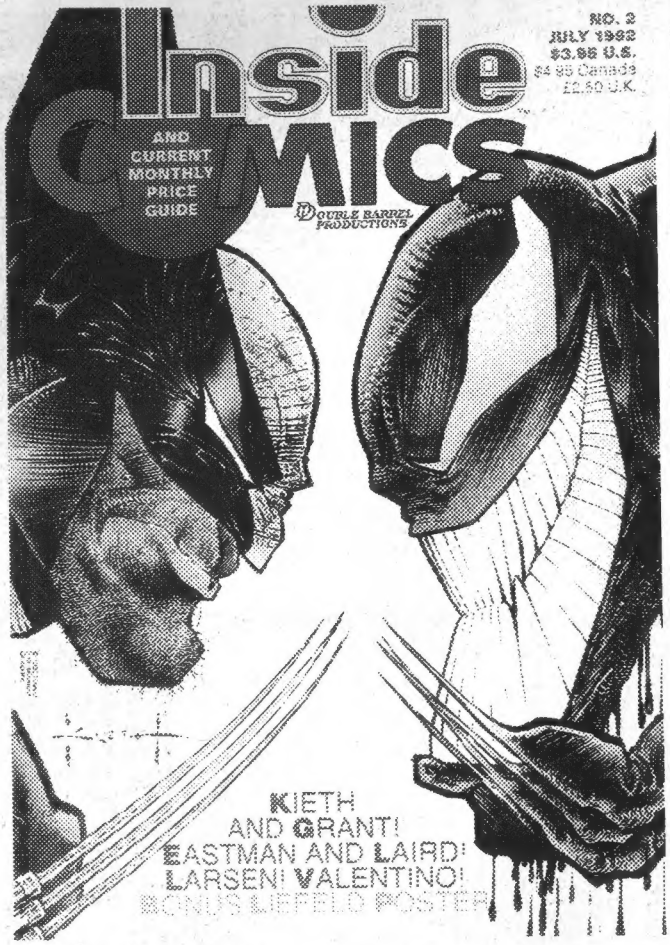

Inside Comics cancelled at #3

IN 1973, when journalist Joe Brancatelli launched **Inside Comics** as a comics feature magazine, the lack of a large direct sale audience led to its cancellation at issue four.

Now the recently revived title, no longer a newsprint newsstand magazine but instead a 196 page direct sale glossy, has been cancelled at issue three.

Yet this new incarnation had become an instant top seller, combining the dominant aspects of the industry; news, interviews, historical articles and a price guide. Its success had been almost guaranteed with **Inside Comics'** two publishers, Fred Greenberg and Jay Maybruck, ideally placed to recognise market opportunities.

Greenberg is owner of America's largest convention organisers, Great Eastern Conventions, while Maybruck owns Sparkle City Comics, one of America's largest back issue suppliers.

But within the last few weeks several sudden developments have taken place. Sparkle City has now been taken over by Steve Geppi's Diamond Comic Distributors, who only weeks earlier had also acquired Gerber Publishing, producers of the excellent **Photo-Journal Guides**.

In August, Maybruck told **Comics International** that Greenberg was no longer involved in **Inside Comics**. Then, following the San Diego convention, a surprise announcement was made that the title had been cancelled.

DC editorial management undergoes restructuring

DC COMICS has announced a series of changes in its editorial management structures effective from September 1st, 1992.

Through these changes and others set to follow, DC is apparently reacting to its overall share loss in the direct sale market, due to Marvel's aggressive growth.

Exploring alternatives within the comic market, the company will continue to diversify its product to suit tastes beyond mainstream adventure comics, through such lines as the existing *Piranha Press*, the new *Vertigo* imprint and the *Milestone* projects.

Dick Giordano, vice president and editorial director, is to spend the next year concentrating on new programmes as well as examining the actual editorial quality of the DC titles, rather than being involved in their day-to-day editorial production.

Karen Berger becomes group editor of the Vertigo line, Andrew Helfer is to oversee the Experimental Projects division, while Archie Goodwin, Dennis O'Neil and Mike Carlin become group editors of their own ranges of titles, each with enhanced authority and increased autonomy over editorial content.

The new Creative Affairs department, under senior editor Neal Pozner, will be responsible for support functions including new talent development and both freelance and internal liaison.

Paul Levitz, executive vice president and publisher, will now be able to involve himself in daily editorial management for the first time since his promotion in 1980.

Marvel to add 24 new super humans plus a new universe

MARVEL promises a host of new characters for 1993, through its giant-sized annuals and from the mind of horror author Clive Barker.

Marvel Annuals '93

While comics annuals in Britain act as stand-alone anthologies, often bought as Christmas presents, America's summer-released annuals often present only a chapter of a continuing story.

For the last five years, Marvel has used its annuals in a cross-over marketing move, with stories and characters interwoven across various different titles, so **Punisher** readers would pick up **Captain America** annuals, or **Thor** readers would find an annual story continued in an **Avengers** annual. But next year there will be no crossovers, no family groupings (such as Avenger-related, or mutant-related titles) and no umbrella titles.

Instead, as senior editor Mark Gruenwald explained, Marvel is to unite its 1993 summer annuals with a common theme rather than a common storyline.

Each of the 25 annuals will act as a springboard to introduce a major new super-hero or super-villain.

The Barkerverse

Following on from his existing comics titles, horror author Clive Barker has announced that he is now embarking on creating an entire comic book universe exclusively for Marvel's Epic imprint.

The first four monthly titles are:

O **Saint Sinner**: a man with the power to change any living form into a more advanced or more primitive evolutionary state, and who is possessed by a psychotic sadistic spirit as well as an angel.

O **Hyperkind**: a youthful super-hero group who have retrieved the powers of a band of failed heroes from the past, and who must protect Earth from such villains as Paragon John and Mandamus Thermakk.

O **Hokum and Hex**: an ineffectual standup comic is given amazing powers after a godlike creature dooms Earth in a game of chance.

O **Ectokid**: a 14-year old boy who can see and enter into the world of the dead because he was fathered by a ghost.

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26th SEPTEMBER WH SMITHS
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Pat Mills, Kevin Walker

3rd OCTOBER WATERSTONES
ST ANNES SQUARE, MANCHESTER 2pm
Peter Doherty, Dean Ormston, John Smith, Kevin Walker

10th OCTOBER WATERSTONES
NEW GEORGE ST, PLYMOUTH 2pm
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BE THERE...CREEPS!

San Diego Comic Convention '92

Each year, America's biggest comics convention continues to grow in size, reflecting the increasing public awareness of the comics publishing and collecting industries. The following is a combination of three commissioned reports from Deborah Hyde, Simon Joy and Mary Ann Quinn. Photos (c) Marv Sloben, 1992.

Deborah Hyde reports:

FOR THE second consecutive year, the 23rd annual San Diego Comic Convention was held at the city's new waterfront convention centre.

Larger than previous venues, it boasted a staggering 329 exhibitors, including over twenty publishers and special guests such as horror author Clive Barker, writer/artist John Byrne, filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola, **Turtles** co-creator Kevin Eastman, animator Ray Harryhausen, Batman creator Bob Kane, Marvel co-creators Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and **Fat Freddy's Cat** writer-artist Gilbert Shelton.

"Artists' Alley" contained almost 150 creators offering autographs and sketches, covering a broad spectrum from seventies stars Michael Kaluta and Bernie Wrightson to current favourites Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld.

Publishers had a separate portfolio review section, providing the opportunity for aspiring artists to have their work scrutinised by top publishers Marvel, Valiant, Dark Horse, Tundra and Fantagraphics.

Two television crews were present; Toronto's well-established *Prisoners of Gravity* and the BBC, under the direction of **British Price Guide** publisher Duncan McAlpine.

Duncan was seen to interview Bob Kane, William Shatner, Francis Ford Coppola and Ray Harryhausen for a projected tv series we'll probably be hearing more about next year.

A notable event took place when the Jack Kirby Awards were announced. Frank Miller gave a speech in which he asked every person who saw a Marvel representative to go and say to them just two words regarding Kirby himself: "pay back".

VALIANT

Current hot publisher Valiant had a convention booklet advertisement stating that everyone who appeared dressed as one of their characters would receive a free gold logo **Eternal Warrior 1**. The number of polaroids which adorned their booth (and, no doubt, future editorial visuals) proved the success of their offer.

The company's chief operations officer, Steven Massarsky, outlined future Valiant promotions, which include chromium "chase" trading cards to be released in October featuring Valiant *rookie* titles yet to be produced. The company's successful utilisation of metallic cover inks will also extend to a gold-cover **Bloodshot 1**, due in November, their gold logo giveaway for promotion services rendered. Asked if this was a no more than a gimmick similar to Marvel's die-cut and multiple cover first issues, Massarsky replied that the comparison was inappropriate as Valiant did not use these means to sell multiples of the same issue, instead they were giveaways to people supporting Valiant.

Mr. T promotes his new comic at the Now booth (note knife, fork and spoon necklace!)

When asked how the sudden departure of ex-editorial director Jim Shooter had affected the company, Massarsky replied, "I don't see it affecting us very much. Jim was one of five people involved with the creativity of the company. The other four are still involved."

JIM SHOOTER

Shooter himself was present at the convention, signing at the Mile High Comics booth and seemed constantly surrounded by fans. Under a no-competition contract agreed with Valiant publishers Voyager Communications, Shooter was unable announce any plans lest it be construed as violating the terms of the agreement.

However, he did comment, "They can't stop me from listening, and a lot of people have asked to speak to me. I'm keeping doors open."

Regarding the direction of his energies, Shooter said, "I'd like to start another comic-book company; I think that's what I do best".

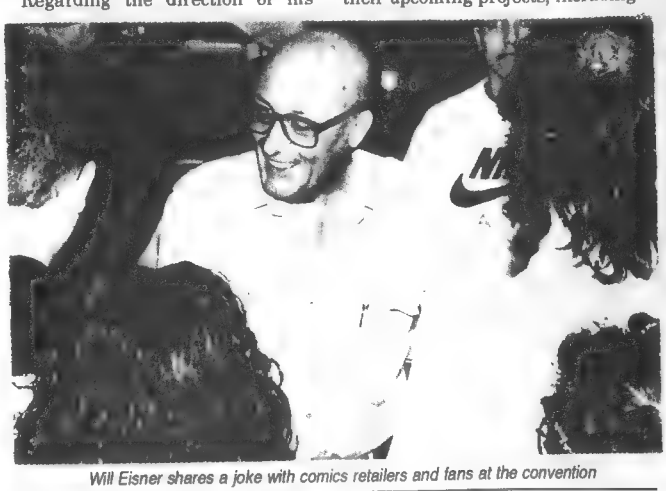
Asked if he would like more autonomy the next time round he replied that he would like an arrangement whereby the financial backers' needs were met without the option of the company being taken from him.

"Nobody needs to have any bad intentions for there to come a point where your interests diverge..." he added. "They want to sell the company and cash in and yet still want to keep it going."

Feeling that most backers think about their exit strategy - how to get their money out - right from the beginning, Shooter expressed the belief that there were ways to do it "without tearing the company apart".

IMAGE COMICS

Jim Valentino of Image spoke about their upcoming projects, including a team-up with Bob Burden's **Flaming Carrot**. The publisher is also "in serious negotiation" with Alan Moore, although nothing had been finalised at the time.



Will Eisner shares a joke with comics retailers and fans at the convention

MARVEL

While Marvel is the mass market industry leader, director of sales Lou Bank commented, "This year one of our primary goals is to remind people that we have a creator-owned line of books published under our Epic imprint that goes beyond super-heroes and includes horror, science fiction and psychological thrillers".

To this end, their guests included Clive Barker (who also appeared at Eclipse), William Shatner and Sergio Aragones, about whom Bank added, "There's no-one better to meet at a convention". There's no disputing that Aragones' vitality adds to the sense of fun.

Bank hinted at major plans to revamp Epic next year, although details are not forthcoming as yet. But this Epic emphasis by no means led to super-hero neglect. Marvel hosted comics veterans Stan Lee and John Romita Sr., among a long list of other guests, including Britain's Liam Sharp, artist on Marvel UK's **Death's Head**.

DEALERS

Most dealers were delighted with their takings, especially considering the recession.

Any extrapolations regarding the state of the market however, must be made bearing one thing in mind: since fans travel large distances, and this is a major event, the sales achieved probably did not represent run-of-the-mill purchases so much as savings accumulated especially for the convention.

Chuck Rosanski of Mile High Comics attributed the market's preoccupation with "investables" to an influx of people from the sports trading cards area - which is highly speculation-oriented. Asked if a chain of speculation must involve someone at the end who wishes to buy the article for its own worth rather than as an investment, Rosanski replied that he felt this was certainly *not* the case.

Citing trading cards again he said, "everyone operates on the basis of the greater fool".

Offered many collections of speculative material, he takes about one in ten of them, and pays 8-10 cents on each book. The same sort of reports from other dealers suggests that the supply and demand ratio is simply not such that gains can be said to be reliable or enduring.

Art dealers' businesses were also well patronised, with sales across the board from the old to the very recent, with the highest levels most emphatically achieved on Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko artwork.

Mary Ann Quinn reports:

21,000 people attended the event this year, an increase of 6,000 on

last year's total.

Why? Because of the lure of all the big names in the business: artists, writers and the rest. All were either signing, sketching or talking and mixing with fans and fanboys alike.

The distributors and publishers - both mainstream and independent - were all there. The independent houses such as Malibu, Valiant and Dark Horse were extremely busy. Signings by the stars caused mayhem, with not only hardened fans but also many retailers queuing, all wanting to get their comics signed and thus increasing their value.

By British standards the convention was huge, with over 500 tables, an artist's alley (with more than 80 artists in attendance at any one time), an art auction section and of course retailers, selling everything and anything from Golden Age through to the newest, just-delivered comics.

Also anxious not to be outdone were the exhibitors, keen to tell you just how good they and their products were. And with incentives and freebies, who could resist?

The convention buzzed with talk about the latest hot titles, who was joining whom, what moves the distributors were making and what cross-overs were happening. There was also a lot of debate over the strengths and potential weaknesses of all the publishing houses.

TRADING CARDS

Trading card company Topps weren't to be outshone, with their 11-minute behind-the-scenes video about Bram Stoker's film *Dracula*, and a preview of their upcoming **Dracula** comic book... A first, perhaps, for the giant of the trading card industry?

Each of the publishers had their star creators, perhaps the biggest of which (in more ways than one) was Now Comics' Mr T, promoting their new comic of the same name.

Attendees were treated to literally hundreds of free goodies, with something at every booth to tempt both the faint-hearted and the seasoned comics fan. And only in America could giving blood be an incentive for a bag of goodies!

The art auction was certainly a highlight, with creators drawing sketches which were then auctioned off to the highest bidder.

This year's highest bid was for a Charles Vess *Death* piece (from **Sandman**) which sold for $2,400.

This convention really offered something for everyone. The pros were able to network with colleagues and publishers alike, lining up future projects. Publishers were able to make a larger audience aware of their products, and aspiring artists could be seen with the various publishers, showing their portfolios and even landing jobs.

Fans, of course were able to meet their favourite creators, see programmes and talks, get original artwork, fill holes in their collections and socialise with other fans with similar tastes.

The dealer tables were totally integrated, with major heavyweights next to smaller sole traders, with one representation having travelled over from the Far East.

The only shadow cast over the event was a valid complaint from some of the exhibitors on the trade day remarking on the obvious greed frenzy of some retailers who were bulk grabbing at every available free gift and signing in sight.

A close encounter of the Turtle kind at the Mirage Publishing booth

THE EISNER AWARDS

Perhaps one of the high spots for the British comics industry was The Eisner Awards. DC Comics and British creators proved a potent combination with the company bringing home nine of the eighteen Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards.

Top of the awards tree was **Sandman**, Neil Gaiman's horror fantasy series for DC. The title also won Best Continuing Series and Best Single Issue or Story for *Seasons of Mists*, the story-line which appeared in issues #22-28.

In addition Neil Gaiman won the Best Writer Award, with Simon Bisley winning Best Artist for **Batman/Judge Dredd: Judgment on Gotham**.

Brian Bolland won the Best Cover Artist Award for **Animal Man**, so all in all the British creators did extremely well.

MILESTONE

San Diego this year also saw the debut of Milestone, a newly-formed independent company. They are a multi-media, innovative new company who will be doing all their own packaging and licensing, and already have a raft of projects planned for launch in the industry.

They will be producing and packaging a series of books for DC, who will publish and distribute the line. Milestone intend to roll out four new titles in the Spring of 1993.

Milestone's team consists of: editor-in-chief Dwayne McDuffy (former Marvel and Harvey Comics editor and writer on **Deathlok** and **Prince: Alter Ego**); president Derrick Pringle (former editor of **Black Enterprise Magazine** and editor of **Money Magazine**); head of production, Michael Davis (artist on **Shado**, and **Etc.**) and creative director Denys Cowan (artist on **Batman**, **The Question**, **Deathlok**, **Prince: Alter Ego** and **Lobo: Blazing Chains of Love**).

Milestone stated that its function was not only to produce the best comic books it can, but also that it hoped to be at the forefront of a revolution in the image of black people and other minorities, both within and outside of the comics medium.

VALIANT

Valiant were rewarding retailers with a large display of their titles, including the much sought-after gold editions as well as discussing their well-defined seven year plan now they have the renewed secure financial backing to realise it.

When asked about British retailers being unable to obtain their gold edition premiums, they replied that all distributors had been allocated their quotas. It was quickly pointed out that neither distribution centre in Britain had received theirs, and consequently we foreigners were being overlooked. The situation is being investigated.

Hopefully Valiant publishers Voyager Communications will consider the British convention, UKCAC, as important as DC and Marvel do each year, there presence would be welcomed as along with Image/Malibu, they certainly cornered the market at San Diego.

A white-suited Jon Hartz outlining Valiant's future plans to an intrigued listener

TRADING CARDS

Simon Joy reports:

One of the surprises of the Convention was in the range of prices being asked for the same items. A prime example being the gold and silver X-Men holograms.

These had been given away free of charge to retailers by Marvel as a thank you for the quantities of the new **X-Men 1E** ordered.

Prices for these varied: the cheapest I found for the silver version was $12, and for the gold, $75. So far, two confirmed sales in this country have been £40 for the silver edition and a staggering £200 for the gold!

Among other items quickly changing hands were the Jim Lee X-Men tin sets. Limited to 7,500, this item consists of a circular tin with all the fan-favourite X-people around the outside and the complete set of cards and holograms inside.

Chris Achilleos had flown over from Britain, and was busy promoting his forthcoming card series - once again excellent quality, and sure to be popular amongst the fantasy art fiends who enjoyed the earlier Frank Frazetta and Boris Vallejo sets.

The Ultimate Trading Card Company announced that they are soon to release *Northern Exposure* trading cards. These are based on the TV series (recently shown in the UK). Special cards include some with randomly packed autographs and a competition offering a trip to star in one of the episodes still being shot.

Topps were busy previewing their *Dracula* cards with photos from the Francis Ford Coppola movie and artwork by Mike Mignola. The clips of the movie that I saw looked great.

One thing to keep an eye out for is the next issue of **Previews**, which has a *Silver Surfer* prism card.

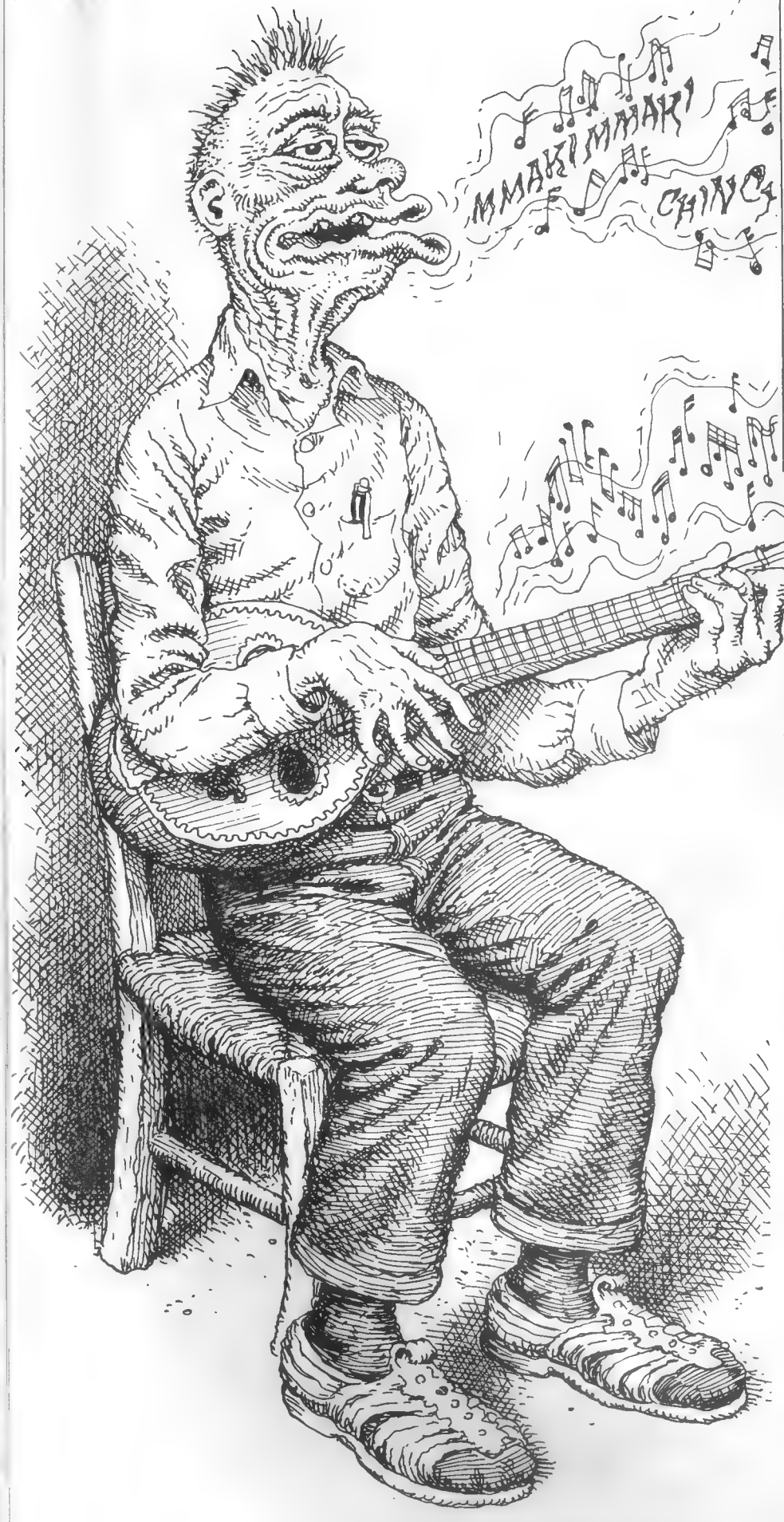
For those of you who have not yet seen the promo card from the upcoming Marvel Masterwork series: track one down. The box and packs were on display at San Diego, along with a host of other cards.

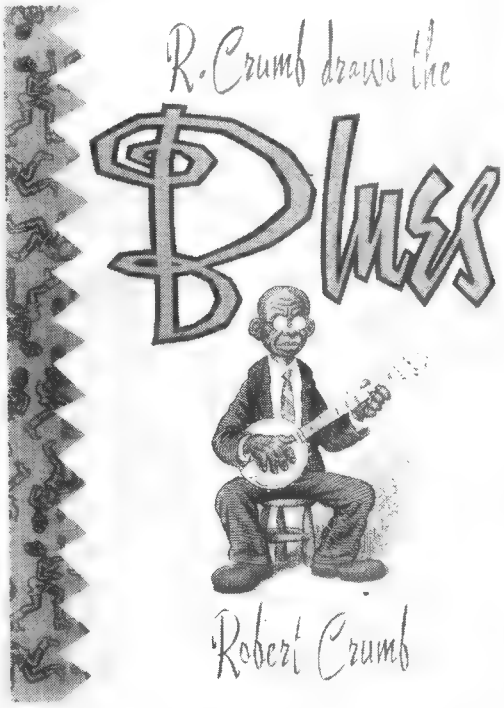
The first thing that strikes you about the cards is the artwork, by Joe Jusko, and the quality of production. A limited case run and innovative hologram cards are going to make this 100-card series hotter than hell. One wholesaler I spoke to had orders for over 400 cases.

Also on display were uncut framed sheets from the series, featuring three of the promo cards with a certificate of authenticity, priced at about $350 - a great addition to anyone's card or art collection.

Another point worth noting is the sale, by one American gallery of Paul Mount's art from the Jim Lee *X-Men* and *Marvel Series III* card sets, once again beautifully framed and mounted and very reasonably priced (the lowest being $100 and the highest - for Carnage - $850).

On a personal note, I had to search high and low for the fifth hologram to the *Star Trek: Next Generation* series. I eventually found one for $20. Not cheap, but well worth the bucks for this Gold Enterprise card. ●





R. CRUMB DRAWS THE BLUES

An accomplished musician on banjo, guitar and ukelele and an collector of early jazz and blues records, Robert Crumb consta writes and draws about music of all kinds. Brought together fo first time from all stages of his career these strips range from the to the heartbreaking. Real people with real problems are the stance of stories like *Jelly Roll Morton's Voodoo Curse* and *Pa* while Crumb's celebrated zaniness can be seen in *Cubist Be- Comics, The Old Songs are The Best Songs* and *Sunny Side* Crumb is as obsessed with music as he is with sex, and his extra nary talent shines throughout this collection.

R. Crumb is a kind of American Hogarth, a moralist with a bl mind. Time Maga

Crumb's work has had a revolutionary effect on the comic-b industry . . . Laughter is his weapon against everything.
New York Times

R. Crumb makes me proud to be an American.
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NEWS europe

Atomeka '93

BEYOND its first launch, October's **White Trash**, the new Atomeka imprint's line will begin next spring. Ideally, **White Trash** would have been part of the launch package, but the title had already been solicited from the trade as a Tundra title.

Following last issue's announcement concerning the ownership of the *Atomeka* imprint, **A1** co-editor Garry Leach contacted **Comics International** to explain that, while Titan Distributors had funded the project, their part-ownership was in the publication (excluding Marvel's current American **A1** series), not its publishing company.

Under Kevin Eastman's ownership, Atomeka's spring line-up consists of four new titles:

- **Kingdom of the Wicked** (4 issues, 44 colour pages) by Ian Edgington and D'Israeli. A children's book author's nightmares about his imaginary world.
- **Strange Embrace** (4 issues, 48 black and white pages) by David Hine. Described as a modern gothic storyline somewhere between Chester Brown and Jose Munoz.
- **Lords of Misrule** (oneshot graphic novel plus 6 following 32 page colour issues) by Gary Erskine and John Tomlinson. Lovecraft meets *Twin Peaks*.
- **Monster Massacre** (7 issues, 64 page launch followed by six 48 page issues) Anthology by Bisley, Gibbons, Hewlett, etc. Described as "senseless violence and steroids".

Under the Tundra imprint **Big Numbers** is to continue, with issues three and four almost ready. But following the considerable delays when the project was under the Mad Love imprint, Tundra is wisely holding back printing until issues five and six are completed.

Retaining its cumbersome square format, it is anticipated that **Big Numbers** will be relaunched next spring, with issues 1, 2 and 3 a month apart, then continuing on a bi-monthly basis.

2000AD gifts

BRITAIN's flagship adventure comic **2000AD** is about to start its latest promotional campaign, one which will appeal greatly to comic fans.

Instead of attaching free gifts to attract new readers, the September 12th issue begins a 3-week "thank you" to readers and fans, with its cover mounted *micro-guides*.

These booklets are story indices for the first 800 progs, painstakingly detailing writer and artist credits, plus dates and prog numbers for every single story published.

Though prog 800 will also see a price change from 50p to 60p, like Marvel UK's **Overkill**, it will not only contain more editorial material than standard American comics but it will still be 10 to 15p less expensive.

Dredd joins Office of Fair Trading

DESPITE having worked in the comics industry for over 20 years, editing titles ranging from **Tarzan** to **DC Super-Heroes**, Vanessa Morgan has never focused on the insular "direct sale" market.

Instead, she has aimed at the national news trade and consumer protection groups, often using comic strips to inform as well as entertain the mass market. Her latest project, with co-writer and designer Mike Gibas, is a classic example.

With an initial print run of 750,000, **Info** is a free full colour magazine published by The Office of Fair Trading designed to help and advise teenagers.

While it could have been a dry and unappealing package, the use of vibrant design and the inclusion of comic strips makes **Info** a highly attractive magazine.

From a Mike Gibas script, Bryan Talbot produces a full-colour *Judge Dredd* strip about dishonest traders, while Hunt Emerson, Graham Higgins, Caspar Williams and Craig Dixon also contribute strips and illustrations.

Copies will be circulated to all secondary schools to be used with BBC's *Lifeline* tv series, bringing comics work to an audience which in all probability has never even heard of the direct sale market.

Further information is available from The Office of Fair Trading on 071-242 2858.

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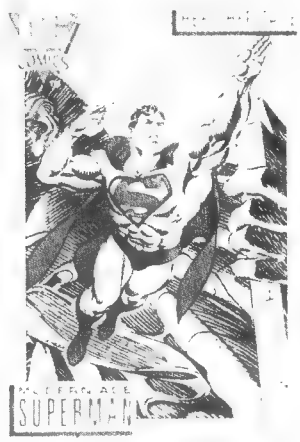

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ACME TWO - Some things are worth waiting for

Penguin's new Hernandez collection

PENGUIN BOOKS is to publish the softcover **House of Raging Women**, a collection from the critically-acclaimed **Love & Rockets** series by Jaime Hernandez.

Launched on 24th September with a £6.99 cover price, the trade paperback reprints stories which originally appeared in the Hernandez Bothers' cult classic title during the 1980s. The magazine-sized **Love & Rockets** black and white strips have been reduced to fit Penguin's "graphic novel" format.

House of Raging Women is based on the Los Angeles wrestling sorority which, the book's cover copy tells prospective readers, "captures the angst of life in L.A."

New issue of nostalgia digest

ISSUE six of the digest sized 100 page nostalgia magazine, **Paperback, Pulp and Comic Collector** features a tribute to EC Comics and more information on Ron Turner's sf comics work for **Tit Bits** as well as articles on tv fantasy and Britain's most prolific authors.

Paul Duncan's *The Story of Crime Noir* traces the development of the genre from Joseph Conrad's novel, **Heart of Darkness** to David Lynch's TV drama series, *Twin Peaks* while Ray Gosling's study, *Telefantasy Authors: A History of American Television* reveals the origins of TV cult classics.

Priced £2.95 it is available from publishers Zardoz Books at 20 Whitecroft, Dilton Marsh, Westbury, Wilts. BA13 2DJ, priced £2.95.

Titan to launch UK edition of Sandman: Season of Mists

THE AWARD-winning Neil Gaiman serial **Sandman: Season of Mists** (issues 22-28), already available as a DC trade paperback, is to be published in Britain as a mass-market edition by Titan Books.

Priced £8.99, the 224 page full colour edition with new cover art by Dave McKean and an introduction by Harlan Ellison will be launched on September 17th.

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1992
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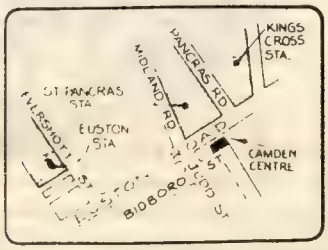

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ASA

Massive expansion plans over next twelve months

Marvel UK to launch eighteen new titles

*Above: David Lloyd's new cover artwork for the latest edition of **Night-Raven: House of Cards**. Below: Bryan Hitch's cover artwork for **Team Helix 1**, guest-starring Wolverine.*

FOLLOWING THE American direct sales success of London-based Marvel UK's recently launched three monthly titles, a further eighteen projects are being planned for release across the forthcoming year.

Motormouth & Killpower, Warheads and **Hell's Angel** (soon to be given a less offensive title for certain parts of America as **Dark Angel**) have tapped into a new vein of talent for the rapidly expanding Marvel Comics.

The fortnightly anthology **Overkill**, initially featuring episodic and abridged versions of the same strips, had been launched in the UK as a parent paper to the spin-off US colour titles, providing the company with two markets for basically the same material.

Unfortunately, because of the different tastes of each country, it failed to reach a mass market in Britain, as well as suffering through over-complex story structures, episode rescheduling, and the sudden change in direction to incorporate American super-heroes.

But while the UK news trade sales have diminished, the use of established Marvel superheroes has given the strips instant "ordering power" in the US direct sale market.

This formula, linking with such American comics heroes as Wolverine, Cable, Deathlok, Iron Man and Nick Fury, is being fully exploited in the company's future projects, all of which are 32 page $1.75 mando printed monthlies unless detailed otherwise.

WINTER 1992 LAUNCHES

DEATH'S HEAD II

Following the success of the 4-issue **Death's Head II** series, a continuing monthly will launch in October.

Produced by Dan Abnett, Liam Sharp and Andy Lanning, the mando **Death's Head II** title will guest-star The X-Men and spin off from a **Warheads** appearance of the character.

THE INCOMPLETE DEATH'S HEAD

One month later, a 12-issue maxi-series will reprint the original Death's Head strips, from **Doctor Who Magazine** (where the character was first launched), **Dragon's Claws** and the first **Death's Head** series. Dan Abnett and Simon Coleby will produce new linking material.

BATTLETIDE

Co-starring Killpower (from the **Motormouth** series) and Death's Head II, **Battletide** is a 4-issue mini-series launching in October by writers Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning with artwork by Geoff Senior.

Pitting the bounty hunter from the future against the assassin with the body of a 30-year old but the mind of an 11-year old, the series co-stars Hell's Angel, Wolverine, Hercules and Sabretooth.

DIGITEK

The deadline-stricken serial from **Overkill**, is finally released as a 32-page $1.95 mini-series in October.

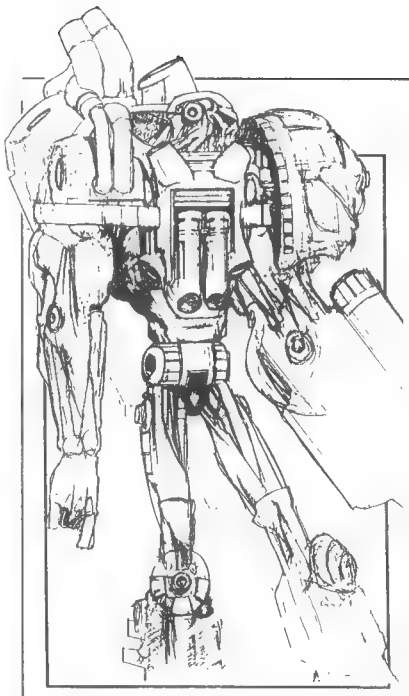
Guest-starring Deathlok, the computer warrior's story is produced by writers John Tomlinson and Andy Lanning, with fully painted artwork by Dermot Power.

TEAM HELIX

A 4-issue mini-series launching in November written by Andy Lanning and Graham Marks.

Lanning also produces art breakdowns, from Bryan Hitch's character designs, for penciller Phil Gascoine and inker Kev Hopgood.

Co-starring Wolverine, the story



tells of five genetically enhance teenagers and their first experience of the world outside a laboratory as they face the menace of Prime Evil and his murderous Pride.

The Team Helix teenagers are also set to guest star in other Marvel UK titles in 1993.

NIGHT-RAVEN

The Dez Skinn and Richard (2000AD) Burton creation, **Night-Raven** reappears in a US format republication of last year's **House of Cards** graphic novel by originating artist David Lloyd and writer Jamie Delano.

Priced $6.95, the 64 page oneshot ships on November 13 with David Lloyd providing new cover artwork.

SPRING 1993 LAUNCHES

MyS-TECH WARS

A January premiering 4-issue series

*Top: Chris Halls' **Death Rattle** sketch. Above: From **Super Soldiers** by Andrew Currie.*

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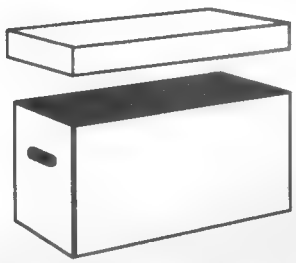

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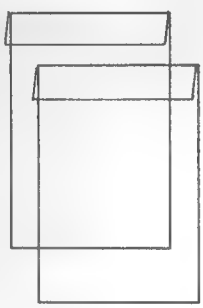

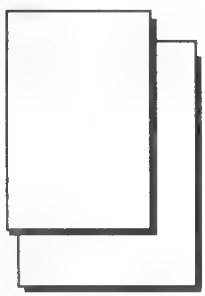

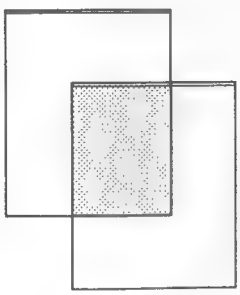

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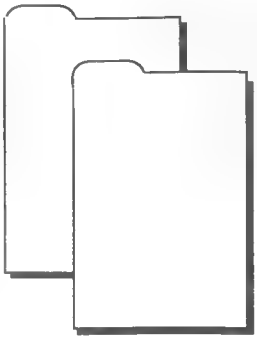

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Above: Brian Williamson pencil illustration of Ghost Rider and a Shadow Rider. Below: Liam Sharp's character sketch for ***Gunrunner****.*

by Dan Abnett and Bryan Hitch which will also cross over into regular titles **Dark Angel, Warheads, Motormouth** and **Pendragon**.

Guest-starring Nick Fury, it promises an epic battle between the Marvel UK heroes and Mephisto's servants, the MyS-TECH organisation.

Following the mini-series, a spin-off team book is being planned by Cumbria based creators Steve Parkhouse and Bryan Hitch.

BLOOD SEED

A 4-issue mini series provisionally set for a May launch, **Blood Seed** is to be written by Paul Neary with art by Liam Sharp. The title is planned to mix classic sword and sorcery images with new wave British nastiness.

SUMMER 1993 LAUNCHES

BLACKAXE

The ultimate mercenary, carrying the ultimate weapon.

Created by Michael Bennent and Edmund Perryman, the story's immortal central character is the end-product of 10,000 years of work. A towering warrior with state of the art armour, he wields a hi-tech battle axe bigger than himself.

Hired by the MyS-TECH board to murder a leading cybernetics scientist, he must first deal with the combined powers of the Fantastic Four as well as other well-known guest stars.

GENE MACHINE

By Michael Cook and Christian Gorny, **Gene Machine** tells of the attempts by future scientists to prevent the risks of genetic engineering in the past.

Their agent, the Gene Machine travels back in time to the 1990s on his quest, bumping into such heroes as Wolverine, Sasquatch and Thor en route.

GUNRUNNER

Gunrunner is an intriguing series. Marvel announces that as yet it has no writer, no penciller, no inker, and no editor, but the 4-issue mini-series has been scheduled to launch in July.

It tells of a genetically engineered sub-human warrior species created specifically for an alien war in the distant past.

Once the war ends, the surviving warriors are eradicated. But a few survive, including Gunrunner, who is destined to demonstrate his cruel code of ethics on the major super-heroes of the 20th century.

PLASMER

Like **Gunrunner**, **Plasmer** is a four issue mini-series scheduled for a July launch. It also has no creative team as yet announced.

But its aim appears to be to wreak world-wide havoc as it threatens to upset the entire planet's natural balance.

Marvel's publicity asks the question, is its ultimate goal destruction -- or salvation?

And who really knows?

SHADOW RIDERS

Another 4-issue mini-series, **Shadow Riders** is the group name for five biker outcasts, each given a special power by the Dark Angel to help overpower MyS-TECH.

The series, by John Freeman, Brian Williamson and *Judge Armitage* artist Charlie Adlard will guest star Ghost Rider and X-Force's leader, Cable.

SUPER SOLDIERS

Another Michael Bennent creation, **Super Soldiers** will be drawn by Andrew Currie and tell of a 1980s equivalent to Captain America. The sole survivor of a team of Super Soldiers, Nuke, was given the task of terminating Daredevil. He did not succeed.

In Britain, a similar programme was cancelled, but the one success, code named Joseph, has escaped, but only after his memory has been wiped.

WILD THING

Another creation of ex-Fleetway & Dark Horse editor Michael Bennent, **Wild Thing** is to be written by Simon Jowett and drawn by Duke Mighten.

The story tells that by 1996 virtual reality is no game, especially for Nikki Doyle, the Wild Thing who fights against the virtual reality junkies, who turn to crime to feed their addiction.

LATE 1993 LAUNCHES

DEATH RATTLE

A 4-issue mini-series by new creators Craig Huston and Chris Halls which tells of a prototype to the Death's Head II character, Death Rattle.

Described by Marvel UK as their most unhinged character, the story tells of its escape through time and its creator Doctor Necker following its mayhem-strewn path and attempting to track it down.

DEATH METAL

The similarly named **Death Metal** is the improved version of the Death's Head II creation and was first seen in the **Death's Head II** 4-issue series.

The character is to reappear in his own mini-series, though Marvel has no details at present of writer, penciller, inker or editor.

DOCTOR WHO: CLASSIC COMICS

Outside of the range of super-hero comics, Marvel UK is also expanding its **Doctor Who** line with the November launch of **Doctor Who: Classic Comics**.

The series will mix comic strip material from past publishers of the BBC-licensed character, featuring both vintage Gerry Haylock and Harry Lindfield work from Polystyle's **TV Comic** as well as early Dave Gibbons material from **Doctor Who Weekly.**

Included in the mix will be the very first Doctor Who comic strip ever published. Originally black and white artwork, it is being coloured especially for Marvel.

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COMICWATCH

Answering the demand for investment news on 'hot' titles, ComicWatch details the current average selling price of high demand comics which have recently increased or fallen in value. Compiled by Derek G. Skinn

The **Comic Book Price Guide for Great Britain** produces a comprehensive annual overview and forthcoming update of UK values for US comics, while the various American guide magazines detail US values for American buyers. But the UK value can fluctuate rapidly for 'key' issues through sudden increased demand when heroes, villains or creators suddenly become popular.

Generally this can correspond with American values, but not for UK nationally distributed Marvel and DC titles which arrive in bulk two months after comic shop (air-freighted) supplies and are later advertised at special discount prices.

Because of their frequency or country of origin, guides and updates are unable to reflect how this can instantly affect UK prices, and even the better established US guides are invariably in disagreement with each other.

By taking average values based on the actual current month's selling prices from comic shops and mail order companies throughout Britain, **Comics International** produces *ComicWatch* as a consumer aid to help follow the dramatic changes in 'hot' popular comics every month.

When using the *ComicWatch* statistics, please bear in mind the following points.

- The *average* values are taken from actual selling prices of eighteen shop and mail order retailers. These are spread across Great Britain to avoid any regional bias.
- Prices stated are for top grade, near mint copies. Average percentages for lower grades (based on the response to our retail questionnaire) are:
  VF = 75%; FN = 60%; VG = 45%; G = 25%; Fair = 15%; Poor (but complete) = 7.5%
- The Dealer Price Range is included to show how prices can fluctuate greatly, being based on retail overheads, location, supply levels and buying-in prices.
- Source information can be viewed (by appointment), but retailer names will be excluded, as figures are provided in confidence.

% VALUE CHANGE, TITLE & ISSUE	average value	Dealer price extremes	Special Features
+6% Alpha Flight 106	£5.10	£3.00 - £10.00	Northstar comes out
-6% Amazing Spiderman 300	£12.90	£9.50 - £16.00	1st full Venom story
-2% Amazing Spiderman 360	£2.35	£1.95 - £2.95	1st Carnage app.
+6% Amazing Spiderman 361	£4.10	£2.50 - £5.00	1st full Carnage story
= Amazing Spiderman 362	£2.75	£1.50 - £3.50	Carnage Part 2
= Amazing Spiderman 363	£1.90	£0.85 - £3.50	Carnage Part 3
+13% Amazing Spiderman 365	£3.00	£2.00 - £7.50	anniv issue, holo cover
+26% Astonishing Tales 25	£36.50	£29.50 - £50.00	1st Deathlok story
-5% Avengers 263	£3.10	£2.50 - £4.00	1st X-Factor
-13% Captain America 180	£2.70	£1.95 - £3.95	1st Nomad story
+2% Captain America 241	£17.85	£9.95 - £25.00	Punisher story
-7% Captain Marvel 26	£9.00	£7.00 - £12.00	2nd Thanos app.
-5% Captain Marvel 27	£6.25	£4.95 - £8.00	3rd Thanos app.
+5% Daredevil 254	£4.55	£3.00 - £6.00	1st Typhoid Mary
+10% Daredevil 257	£10.70	£3.95 - £15.00	Punisher x-over
-10% Daredevil 295	£1.35	£0.85 - £1.50	Ghost Rider x-over
+5% Darkhawk 1	£3.55	£1.50 - £5.00	1st appearance
-8% Excalibur 42	£1.65	£1.30 - £2.00	1st new look, Davis
+18% Ghost Rider 1 (1973)	£25.00	£15.00 - £35.00	Johnny Blaze version
+11% Ghost Rider 1 (1990)	£9.50	£4.99 - £15.00	1st new look app.
-1% Ghost Rider 5 (1991)	£5.30	£2.75 - £8.50	Punisher story
-7% Ghost Rider 14 (1991)	£2.60	£1.50 - £4.00	1st new Johnny Blaze
-16% Ghost Rider 15 (1991)	£4.65	£3.25 - £6.50	Glow-in-dark cover
-6% Ghost Rider 25 (1992)	£2.30	£1.70 - £3.25	Pop-up centre
+15% Guardians of Galaxy 1	£4.65	£3.95 - £6.00	1st Valentino issue
-10% Guardians of Galaxy 25	£1.90	£1.35 - £2.50	Giant anniv issue
+8% Incredible Hulk 330	£8.50	£4.95 - £12.50	1st McFarlane
-21% Incredible Hulk 340	£9.00	£4.50 - £10.95	Wolverine story
+9% Incredible Hulk 367	£5.00	£1.95 - £7.50	1st Keown artwork
+2% Incredible Hulk 377	£5.10	£1.95 - £7.50	1st 'new' Hulk
-9% Incredible Hulk 393	£2.15	£1.10 - £3.50	30th anniv giant
= Iron Fist 14	£32.20	£25.00 - £39.95	1st Sabretooth app.
+37% Marvel Comics 62	£2.60	£0.90 - £4.95	Deathlok story
+7% Marvel Comics 72	£3.20	£1.75 - £5.00	Weapon X begins
-14% Marvel Comics 100	£1.25	£0.95 - £2.00	Wolv & Ghost Rider
-8% New Mutants 86	£7.00	£4.50 - £15.00	1st Cable appearance
-7% New Mutants 87	£23.45	£12.50 - £37.50	1st full Cable story
-13% New Mutants 98	£3.40	£2.50 - £4.95	1st Deadpool; X-Force
= New Mutants 99	£3.45	£2.00 - £5.00	Penultimate issue
-10% New Warriors 1	£10.35	£5.95 - £15.00	1st issue
new Nomad 1	£1.90	£1.00 - £2.50	1st issue
+10% Platinum Spider-Man 1	217.00	150.00 - 250.00	10,000 print run special
= Power-Man & Iron Fist 66	£8.05	£5.00 - £10.00	2nd Sabretooth
= Punisher 10	£11.10	£4.95 - £14.95	Daredevil x-over
-13% Punisher 57	£2.05	£1.25 - £2.50	Lee gatefold poster
-4% Punisher War Journal 6	£6.70	£4.00 - £10.00	Wolverine story
-6% Punisher War Journal 29	£1.80	£1.50 - £2.00	Ghost Rider Part 1

% VALUE CHANGE, TITLE & ISSUE	average value	Dealer price extremes	Special Features
+9% Punisher War Zone 1	£2.35	£1.10 - £5.00	Diecut cover
new Silver Sable 1	£1.80	£1.00 - £2.50	1st; Metallic cover
+12% Silver Surfer 34	£6.30	£4.95 - £8.50	" Return of Thanos
+7% Silver Surfer 50	£4.75	£2.95 - £7.50	metallic card cover
+2% Spectac Spider-Man 83	£6.90	£3.75 - £10.50	full Punisher origin
+29% Spectac Spider-Man 189	£4.50	£2.95 - £6.00	anniv issue, holo cover
-14% Thor 411	£3.95	£2.50 - £5.00	1st New Warriors app.
-8% Thor 412	£6.60	£4.99 - £10.00	1st New Warriors story
+48% Web of Spider-Man 90	£3.85	£1.60 - £9.99	anniv issue, holo cover
+11% Wolverine 41	£3.95	£1.95 - £5.00	Sabretooth story
-4% Wolverine 50	£2.50	£1.55 - £3.50	diecut extra cover
-3% X-Factor 24	£3.60	£2.50 - £4.00	1st Archangel
= X-Factor 63	£4.00	£1.75 - £5.00	1st Portacio art
-12% X-Factor 68	£2.20	£1.50 - £3.00	Nathan Summers
= X-Factor 71	£2.35	£1.50 - £3.50	1st new team issue
-13% X-Men 201	£9.20	£8.00 - £10.00	birth Nathan Summers
-13% X-Men 248	£6.80	£3.95 - £11.00	1st Jim Lee art
+17% X-Men 258	£5.15	£1.25 - £7.50	Wolverine story; Lee
-8% X-Men 266	£3.60	£1.25 - £5.00	1st Gambit app.
= X-Men 268	£5.60	£2.95 - £8.50	Lee & Williams begin
-11% X-Men 281	£2.75	£1.50 - £6.00	New line-up, 1st Byrne
-10% X-Men 282	£2.50	£1.50 - £3.50	1st Bishop app.
new Akira 1	£6.75	£5.95 - £7.50	Epic; 1st issue
new Batman Shadow of Bat 1	£2.70	£1.95 - £5.00	Special bagged edtn
-8% Deathstroke/Terminator 1	£2.40	£1.50 - £3.50	First issue
-17% Green Lantern 59	£43.00	£29.00 - 70.00	1st Guy Gardner
-14% Green Lantern 116	£4.20	£3.95 - £4.50	1st Guy Gardner GL
+23% Lobo 1 (1990)	£3.40	£2.00 - £6.50	1st issue; Bisley
= Sandman 1 (1989)	£12.00	£7.50 - £15.00	1st Gaiman version
+20% Sandman 21	£6.00	£4.00 - £10.00	Season of the Mist 0
+15% Shade 1 (1990)	£4.75	£3.50 - £7.00	1st Milligan version
-7% Star Trek: Next Gen 1	£3.35	£2.00 - £5.50	1st DC issue
-18% Teen Titans 2	£5.20	£2.00 - £7.00	1st Deathstroke app.
-21% Aliens 1 (1988)	£9.95	£9.00 - £10.50	Dark Horse mini
+54% Archer & Armstrong 0	£3.55	£1.95 - £12.50	Valiant; 1st issue
+257% Harbinger 1	£27.50	£20.00 - £35.00	Valiant; 1st issue
+42% Magnus 1	£7.90	£6.95 - £8.95	1st Valiant issue
new Magnus 0	£49.00	£25.00 - £60.00	Trading card version
+13% Next Men 1	£3.05	£1.95 - £8.50	Dark Horse; Byrne
+8% Next Men 0	£2.85	£1.95 - £4.95	Dark Horse; Byrne
+9% Predator 1 (1989)	£8.35	£3.50 - £12.00	Dark Horse mini
+3% Solar 1	£4.85	£3.50 - £5.95	1st Valiant issue
+53% Solar 10	£8.40	£3.95 - £15.00	Black card cover
new Star Wars: Dark Empire 1	£3.80	£2.30 - £8.50	Dark Horse; 1st issue
+13% Unity 0	£3.05	£1.00 - £3.95	Valiant promo issue
+3% Vampire Lestat 1	£8.25	£3.50 - £10.00	Innovation
+31% X-O Manowar 1	£6.20	£2.95 - £7.00	Valiant; 1st issue

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The ComicWatch Top Twenty Titles

With the ever-growing speculative side of comics collecting, a key to good investments is through quickly identifying the hottest new titles and buying them before they become expensive. While *ComicWatch* can only report on market changes which have already happened, patterns and trends can easily be identified.

The following chart shows the highest price movers over the last 30 days, based on the current stock of the following 18 retailers who completed our questionnaire.

Ace Comics (Colchester), Arcadia Comics (Ashton-Under-Lyne), Avalon Comics (London), Calamity (Middlesex), Comic Cuts (Southport), Comix Shoppe (Swansea), Demon Comics (Hereford), Dynamic Comics (Croydon), Fabian Comics (London), Floppy Tongue (Salisbury), Imagination Station (Carlisle), Incognito (Maidstone), Just Comics (Middlesex), Skinny Melink (London), Squonk (Wellingborough), They Walk Among Us (Surrey), Whatever Comics (Canterbury) and White Light (London)

With four from London, three from the North, one from Wales, one from the West country, six from the South East and three from the Midlands few areas are not represented, although we welcome response from Scottish retailers. The inclusion of three full-time mail order dealers further balances the results.

Rank	Title & issue	Increase (%)	This Month	Last Month	Publisher
1	Harbinger 1	+ 274.3%	£10.70	£3.90	Valiant
2	Archer & Armstrong 0	+ 54.3%	£3.55	£2.30	Valiant
3	Solar 10	+ 52.7%	£8.40	£5.50	Valiant
4	Web of Spider-Man 90	+ 48.1%	£3.85	£2.60	Marvel
5	Magnus Robot Fighter 1	+ 42.3%	£7.90	£5.55	Valiant
6	Marvel Comics Presents 62	+ 36.8%	£2.60	£1.90	Marvel
7	X-O Manowar 1	+ 31.9%	£6.20	£4.70	Valiant
8	Spectacular Spider-Man 189	+ 28.6%	£4.50	£3.50	Marvel
9	Astonishing Tales 25	+ 26.3%	£36.50	£28.90	Marvel
10	Lobo 1	+ 23.6%	£3.40	£2.75	DC
11	Sandman 21	+ 20.0%	£6.00	£5.00	DC
12	Ghost Rider 1 (1973)	+ 17.9%	£25.00	£21.20	Marvel
13	Uncanny X-Men 258	+ 17.0%	£5.15	£4.40	Marvel
14	Guardians of the Galaxy 1	+ 15.0%	£4.65	£4.00	Marvel
15	Shade 1	+ 14.5%	£4.75	£4.15	DC
16	Amazing Spider-Man 365	+ 13.2%	£3.00	£2.65	Marvel
17=	John Byrne's Next Men 1	+ 13.0%	£3.05	£2.70	Dk Horse
	Unity 0	+ 13.0%	£3.05	£2.70	Valiant
19	Silver Surfer 34	+ 11.5%	£6.30	£5.65	Marvel
20	Wolverine 41	+ 11.3%	£3.95	£3.55	Marvel

In our July analysis, relative newcomer Valiant took three out of the top five places, last month they dropped to two, but this month their lead increases with a staggering four out of the top five titles for rapidly increasing values. While the "Carnage" storyline in **Amazing Spider-Man 360-365** had been previous contenders for the top spot, their price rise appears to have settled, only to be replaced by the 30th anniversary Spider-titles as rapidly rising value investments.

Other Marvel notables include the first appearances of Deathlok, Ghost Rider and (the new) Guardians of the Galaxy. However, adverse reaction to Rob Liefeld's **Youngblood** title could have contributed to the fall in value in his earlier **New Mutants** work. **Uncanny X-Men** has slowed considerably, as have the previously *hot* **Punisher** titles.

The demand for the first issue of DC's top title, **Sandman** has failed to rise for two consecutive months, although the award-winning #21, introducing the *Season of the Mist* serial, which featured in third place last month, continues to rise. Despite concern over the possible cancellation of the series with author Neil Gaiman intending to conclude the series shortly, the **Season of the Mists** compilation is being mentioned as DC's top selling compilation since Frank Miller's ground-breaking **The Dark Knight Returns**.

Lobo 1 is DC's other outstanding book, having risen an average of 15% in July, levelled in August, but now -- through the popularity of the recent **Lobo's Back** -- has risen by another 23.6% in value.

Two titles to watch: Innovation's **Quantum Leap 1** and Marvel's **Adventures into Fear 20** (introducing Morbius's solo series, with Paul Gulacy art). While both were in the *ComicWatch* poll forms, no one had any copies in stock to base their prices on.

THE WORST investments you could have made last month comprise our largest five fallers on the *ComicWatch* survey:

Rank	Title & issue	Drop (%)	This Month	Last Month	Publisher
100	Aliens 1	- 20.8%	£9.95	£12.55	Dark Horse
99	Teen Titans 2	- 18.1%	£5.20	£6.35	DC Comics
98	Green Lantern 59	- 16.5%	£43.00	£51.85	DC
97	Ghost Rider 15	- 16.2%	£4.65	£5.55	Marvel
96	Green Lantern 116	- 14.3%	£4.20	£4.90	DC

Are people bored with Guy Gardner following his over-priced **Reborn** mini? It would appear so, with both his first and first costumed appearances in **Green Lantern** having plummeted. While **Ghost Rider 1** remains a strong seller, later issues have all tumbled. **Teen Titans 2**'s sudden fall is reflected in **Deathstroke 1** value, which has also dropped by almost 8%.

Overleaf: Individual retail reports

4TH DIMENSION

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All comics vg to fn. Allow 7-14 days for despatch. Post free for orders over £5. Under £5, 10p per comic. Please list alternatives in case your first choice is out of stock. Where all choices are out of stock, refunds will be made, excluding postal charge. *All cheques & postal orders made payable to Mr. D. Baber.* Tel: (Wed-Sat 12-5.30) 061 237 5996.

Alpha Flight
40-42 45 ..... 0.75
58 ..... 1.50
Amazing Spider-Man
308 ..... 5.50
318 ..... 4.50
319 ..... 4.00
336 341 ..... 1.00
Avengers 235 ..... 1.50
246 248 ..... 1.25
270 ..... 1.00
279 299 305-310 .. 0.75
300 ..... 2.00
311 ..... 1.25
315-318 326 ..... 0.75
319-324 327 330 .. 0.60
Annual 17 ..... 2.00
Avengers W Cst 52 0.75
Captain America
319 ..... 1.25
323 ..... 1.00
336 ..... 1.75
351 353 356-9 361-3 1.00
369 377 378 ..... 0.75
383 ..... 2.00
384 386 ..... 0.60
Classic X-Men
15 16 ..... 1.75
Daredevil 167 ..... 5.00
182 ..... 4.00
186 ..... 3.00
263 265 ..... 1.00
266-268 ..... 0.75
269 270 ..... 1.25
272 275-277 ..... 0.75
284 290 ..... 0.60
292-295 ..... 1.00
Annual 6 ..... 1.50
Doctor Strange
16 17 29 30 32 33 . 1.00
65 ..... 1.25
60 67 70 ..... 1.00
Excalibur 13 ..... 1.50
28 ..... 1.00
Groo 68 ..... 0.75
Incredible Hulk 347 0.80
363 ..... 1.00
365 366 ..... 0.75
Iron Man 159 ..... 1.25
209 219 222 ..... 0.80
224 226 227 229 .. 1.75
232 ..... 1.50
233 234 ..... 1.00
235 238 240 242 .. 0.75
244 ..... 1.20
245 247 257 266 .. 0.75
Machine Man (Smith)
3 4 ..... 1.75
Marvel Comics 2-10 1.25
39 40 ..... 1.00
41 42 ..... 0.80
Marvel Fanfare 34 . 1.50
Marvel Team-Up 73 1.00
Mephisto v Avgrs 4 1.25
Moon Knight (latest)
2 3 ..... 1.50
4 10 ..... 1.25
The Nam 6 ..... 2.00
New Mutants 5 6 8 1.75
51 57 ..... 1.00
58 ..... 0.75
62 63 ..... 1.00
64-67 69 ..... 0.75
71 ..... 1.25
76 ..... 1.00
Power Pack 12 ... 1.00
Punisher 19 ..... 2.00
35-45 ..... 0.75
Savage She-Hulk 100.75
11 151.00
17 19 ..... 0.75
Silver Surfer v3 23 1.50
30 ..... 1.00
31 ..... 1.50
32 ..... 0.75
37 ..... 1.50
51 ..... 0.75
Spectac Spider-Man
90 91 ..... 2.00
113 ..... 1.50
168 ..... 0.60
Spider-Man
1 (green cover) ... 2.25
1 (silver/black) ... 3.00
2 ..... 1.75
Spider-Man Saga 1 1.75
Spiderwoman 47 . 0.75
Strange Tales (2nd)
6 ..... 0.75
17 ..... 0.60
18 ..... 1.00
19 ..... 0.60
Thor 390 ..... 0.60
391-393 ..... 0.75
422-428 ..... 0.60
Web of Spider-Man
35 ..... 1.50
39 ..... 1.25
42 45 ..... 1.00
51 ..... 0.75
72 ..... 0.80
Wolfpack 1 ..... 1.00
2-4 ..... 0.75
Wolverine 22 ..... 1.25
X-Factor 67 ..... 2.00
X-Men 249 ..... 1.00
X-Force 1 ..... 0.95

PRIVATE COLLECTION FOR SALE
6500+ COMICS

Aliens 1 1,5,6	Alpha Flight 1-53	Daredevil 150-290
Batman 391-446 Annuals	The Cult Dark Knight Returns	Avengers 144-340 Annuals & Giants
Excalibur 1-32 Annuals	F Four 48,49 228-308	Ghost Rider Vol 1 Vol 2
Hulk 180,182	Iron Fist 12-15	New Mutants 1-83,86-100
Punisher Mini 1-5	Punisher 1-31 Annuals	Spiderman 298-331 Annuals

Wolverine 1-27, X-Men 96-249 + Annuals

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COMICWATCH RETAIL REPORTS: AUGUST 1992

*In addition to supplying information on current selling prices of 100 hot titles, retailers included in the **ComicWatch** survey are invited to recommend new titles worthy of inclusion and to provide information on related topics. The results of an earlier questionnaire having provided us with the percentage details given on the preceding page for lower than Near Mint grade comics. The subjects discussed in the latest questionnaire follow.*

RECENT TITLE SALES:

Possibly more than ever before, 1992 has been the year old many new comics titles being launched. ComicWatch asked retailers how they are performing, using the following generalisations:

X = excellent v = very good g = good
f = fair p = poor a = abysmal

To bring them into order, the results have been scored from 5 points for excellent, 4 for very good, 3 for good, 2 for fair, 1 for poor, and no marks for abysmal. The following ranks them in order of retail popularity, scoring out of a possible 75 maximum.

#	SCORE	TITLE & PUBLISHER	Number of shops voting in each category x	v	g	f	p	a
1	(72)	Spawn (Image)	13	1	1	-	-	-
2	(61)	Shadow of the Bat (DC)	7	5	2	-	-	-
3	(58)	Savage Dragon (Image)	2	9	4	-	-	-
4	(56)	Morbius (Marvel)	3	5	7	-	-	-
5	(49)	WILDC.A.T.S (Image)	3	5	4	1	-	-
6	(48)	Youngblood (Image)	1	6	4	3	1	-
7	(44)	Nomad (Marvel)	1	2	7	4	1	-
8	(43)	Archer & Armstrong (Valiant)	1	1	11	1	1	-
9	(42)	Next Men (Dark Horse)	1	4	6	3	-	-
10	(41)	Warheads (Marvel UK)	2	2	3	6	3	1
11	(37)	Tekworld (Marvel-Epic)	2	3	3	1	5	1
12	(35)	Pendragon (Marvel UK)	1	2	5	3	1	3
13	(34)	Hell's Angel (Marvel UK)	-	2	5	4	3	1
14	(33)	Motormouth (Marvel UK)	-	2	4	6	2	1
	(33)	Silver Sable (Marvel)	1	1	3	5	5	-
16	(32)	Heckler (DC)	-	2	4	5	2	2
17	(19)	The Hacker Files (DC)	-	-	3	4	2	6
18	(18)	Black Condor (DC)	-	-	3	1	7	3
19	(15)	Terror Inc (Marvel)	-	-	1	4	4	5
20	(13)	Cage (Marvel)	-	-	-	4	5	6
and the wooden spoon award to:								
	(12)	Arion (DC)	-	-	1	4	1	9

CURRENT PUBLISHING TRENDS:

Retailers were also asked for their opinions on several key areas, their replies follow:

Ace Comics' Martin Beeson: "Publishers have created a generation of buyers whose attention span only seems to last 4 issues on any one title."

Avalon's Mark Perry: "Looks like Image is getting its act together with three Image titles arriving on the same day. **Brigade** and **Shadowhawk** sold better than anticipated. All Marvel's polybagged titles are doing well."

Demon Comics' Paul Bentley: "Far too many titles, running out of space to display them. It can't be far off saturation/cancellation point for some titles.

Dynamic Comics' John Newton: "Gimmick covers rule and mutant look-alikes abound. Is this what the customers want? And if so, for how long?"

Fabian's Floyd Alexander: "Low indie print runs make for hot collectable books. Bigger publishers seem to be aiming at the younger market with gimmick covers and special editions."

Imagination Station's Tommy Hoodless: "It's a shame the market's flooded with a lot of sub-standard books. Customers have a wide choice but limited funds mean back issue sale suffer as everyone is scared he/she will miss the next *hot* title."

Just Comics' Justin Ebbs: "Too many expensive titles. DC looks good, but titles are too uninteresting for fans."

Comix Shoppe's Simon Davies: "DC's new stuff (bar **Shadow of the Bat**) is dead in the water. Image and Dark Horse sell well. Valiant sell only as back issues (because they're *hot*?) -- does anyone actually read them?

Calamity Comics' John Holmes: "It would be nice to see DC (in particular) launch some brand new characters rather than rehashing tired old ones."

Skinny Melink: "Too many gimmicky covers. No telling when the bottom will drop out of this market."

Squonk Mail Order's Phil Hall: "Something bad is coming and it's going to leave a lot of debris in its wake."

They Walk Among Us' Jon Browne: "Gimmick covers are making less impact. The book trade has been foil-stamping, die-cutting and embossing for ages, it does catch the eye but won't guarantee a sale any more. DC really need to get their act together. They are not attracting new readers: I sell more **Archer & Armstrong** than **Justice League America**!"

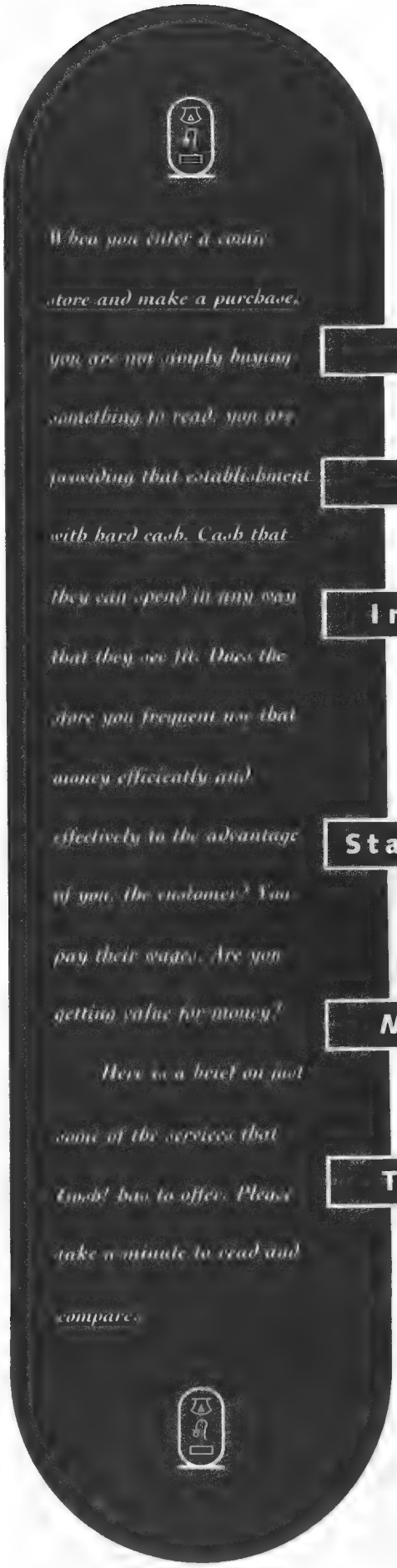
Whatever Comics's Maney Amario: "I asked my customers. Main replies were "don't pre-bag , we're getting fed up with having to buy the same comic twice" and "publishers should spend more money on the content instead of flashy covers".

White Light's Dave Hodson & Tim O'Donnell: "Sturgeon's Law + 9%. Too many first issues that didn't deserve to be published. Gimmick titles and covers have to stop soon or the market will implode just as the US sports trading card market has."

COMICS FEATURE MAGAZINES:

With the increase of titles now flooding the market since the success of **Wizard** (whose sales surpass the combined output of comics publisher Innovation), there has been considerable criticism of the editorial focus switching towards values and investments, and away from more general and historical features. We asked retailers about their ordering of comics industry consumer magazines in an attempt to establish where the main buying market loyalties lie. The results speak for themselves, without any necessary editorial comment except a sincere thank you...

RETAILER	Comicbook Marketplace	Comic Buyer's Guide	CBG Price Guide	Comics Arena	Comic Collector	Comics International	Comics Interview	Comics Journal	Comics Values Monthly	Inside Comics	Overstreet Update	Wizard
Ace Comics	-	5	6	-	40	225	6	18	-	15	-	25
Arcadia	-	-	-	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Avalon	-	2	2	3	8	90	-	-	-	8	2	34
Calamity	2	-	3	2	15	100	2	2	4	4	2	25
Comix Shoppe	-	-	-	-	6	200	-	3	2	-	-	40
Demon Comics	-	-	-	-	-	30	-	-	-	-	-	6
Dynamic	-	-	-	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	5	20
Floppy Tongue	2	3	5	-	-	50	-	2	4	1	10	45
Imagination Station	-	2	-	2	6	50	2	-	3	4	4	15
Incognito	-	1	-	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	6	6
Skinny Melink's	-	2	-	-	-	75	-	2	-	-	2	12
They Walk Among Us	-	2	1	-	6	50	1	2	3	3	12	25
Whatever Comics	-	-	-	-	5	40	-	-	-	-	4	12
White Light	-	4	-	6	3	50	-	4	-	6	-	25
TOTALS	4	21	17	13	89	1085	11	33	16	41	47	290



When you enter a comic store and make a purchase, you are not simply buying something to read, you are providing that establishment with hard cash. Cash that they can spend in any way that they see fit. Does the store you frequent use that money efficiently and effectively to the advantage of you, the customer? You pay their wages. Are you getting value for money?

Here is a brief on just some of the services that Gosh! has to offer. Please take a minute to read and compare.

Exercise your right to a better service.

Staff

At Gosh!, we understand that happy staff mean happy customers. Fair treatment and good working conditions, have led to an extremely low employee turnover, guaranteeing our customers a courteous service from knowledgeable staff.

Supply

We know of no other retailer in the country which uses, on a weekly basis, all three wholesale distributors currently supplying import comics to the U.K. This gives us the edge over our competitors in the areas of both speed and range.

Information

Many, including ourselves, find it hard to keep abreast of what is coming out and when. In answer to this problem, Gosh! publishes and provides for free a weekly information one sheet, listing titles due the following week; those that shipped the previous week; information on cancelled and rescheduled books; as well as news on the 'hot', up-and-coming projects from the various publishing houses.

Standing Orders

This service is ideal for those customers who cannot commit the time for regular visits, and find that, as a result, niggling gaps appear in their collection. Simply leave a list of the new titles you collect with us and be assured that they will be held for you, allowing you to visit, and collect them, at your leisure.

Mail Order

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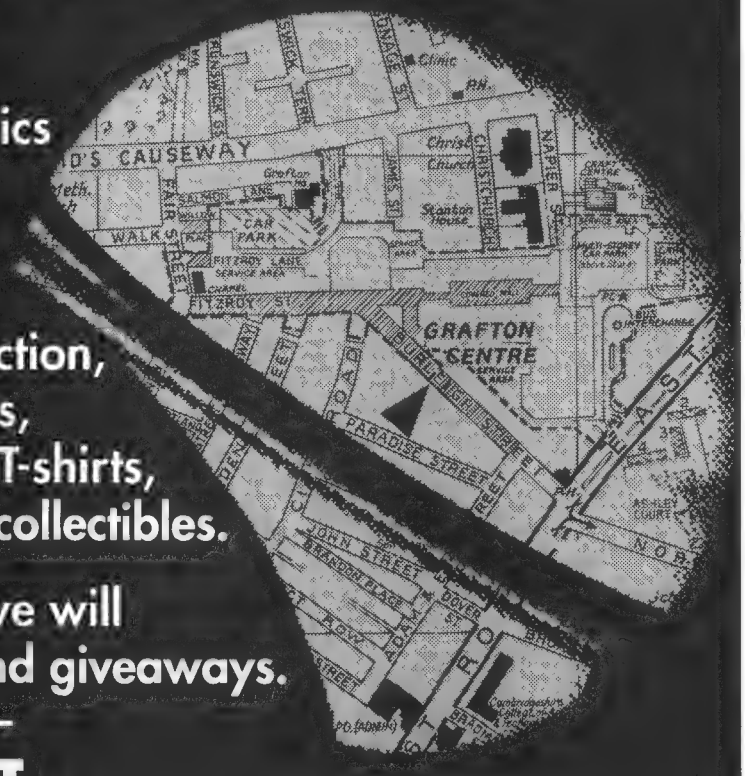

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MEDIA FILE

Associate editor Sarah Bolesworth looks at recent media coverage of comics and related product

SINCE SIEGEL and Shuster created the character in 1938, Superman must have died at least half-a-dozen times, and it would be natural enough to assume that the news media are no longer taken in by the recycling of the Man of Steel through DC's infinite realities.

But when DC Comics' parent, Time Warner previewed Doomsday's grand crime this month, the UK media gorged itself on Superman's imminent demise and when the sad news was regurgitated (5.9.92) it was as if the world had missed a beat: suddenly, the king was dead.

Despite all the evidence that it is Superman himself who always inherits his own throne, tabloid and broadsheet newspapers, the BBC, Sky and countless other bodies squandered enough words on the non-news to fill the Oxford English Dictionary several times over.

It was only in the more measured coverage that a hint of cynicism appeared. **The Guardian** (5.9.92) commented, *"Whether death will be final is another matter. "We don't really know what death means to a Kryptonian," Mike Carlin, editor of DC Superman comic books, admitted. But it hardly takes x-ray vision to see how death could boost comic sales."* Chris Nuttall, on BBC radio's *Today* programme went so far as to suggest that this was all a "marketing ploy to boost sales". Surely not, Chris.

No news is still news

But in the alternative reality of newspapers and broadcasters, the significance of the story had little to do with whether anyone believed it. And news editors really don't care whether the whole thing was a "marketing ploy" or not.

What *they* care about is their "prospects" - or list of news items in ascending importance. This agenda fluctuates according to factors like what coverage is available and what else happens during the day.

And on a day when the real news from wire services is sparse (a week-endish, magazine-ish sort of day), an item like the death of Superman will be pushed up the agenda. Saturday 5th September was one such, and so the "news" received the same amount of coverage as the Chancellor's £7 billion loan the day before.

Skin: off the agenda

It was due in part to editors' prospects lists being stuffed with famine, recession and toe-sucking that Tundra's **Skin** slipped quietly on to the market without a murmur from the tabloid reporters.

In fact, aside from the **Time Out** (5.8.92) and **The Sunday Times** (2.8.92) puffs on "the controversial graphic novel", hardly anyone seemed to know what Milligan and McCarthy's comic *was*.

Pete Milligan's **Time Out** reservations that "the delay will have raised expectations that **Skin** won't be able to fulfil" turned out to be justified. But the comic itself, however "controversial", is not the problem here: the actual controversy is about the way that the book has been packaged and launched.

Why is it, for instance, that **Time Out** editor Dominic Wells thinks that **Skin** is a graphic novel? **Skin** is a short, pungent message which would usually be called an adult comic. Wells' definition derives from the attempt - not only by Tundra - to invest the title with more value as a *product* than it actually has.

But a "graphic novel" might also be thought of as being more respectable, and it was perhaps this that prompted the surprisingly low-profile launch of **Skin**.

Having been rejected by Fleetway, Penguin, Gollancz and John Brown, advocates of its publication were growing increasingly nervous about the title. The reason given for not publishing was, in at least one case, that "the lawyers wouldn't pass it" because of its violence and language. Anyone who did so would (so they said) risk having their company's reputation smeared in the tabloid press.

But in fact, none of the big tabloids would run an exploitation story about **Skin**, simply because Thalidomide - and the fate of its victims - is a subject they couldn't afford to trivialise without alienating readers; and to criticise the *language* but not the intent gets a little complicated. The graphic nature of the violence is no longer an issue: kids see worse things than this on early evening news programmes. Why bother running a story about **Skin** when the real thing is happening in Germany and the Balkans.

Mammoth lost in fog shock

Tundra then, had opted for discretion. Its vision of **Skin** as a piece of work was seemingly obscured by the imaginary fog of tabloid outrage. But a fresh look at **Skin** would have suggested Thalidomide itself as a weapon, if needed: it's pretty central to the comic, after all.

For the media, Thalidomide is a long-dead story, but its current use in this country for the treatment of AIDS certainly isn't. And faced with the seriousness of *that* issue, even the most rabid of tabloid journalists would blanche. As a story, "outrage of kids exposed to f-words and violence in comic" doesn't really work if the reply is "comic exposes new Thalidomide threat", does it?

But any publisher taking **Skin** on - with its baggage of paranoia and hype - is to be applauded. It's difficult to deal with a project so devalued by paranoia, censorious printers (who threw the editorially-accepted strip back at originating publishers Fleetway), jittery lawyers and hangers-on within the industry bent on garnering reflected glory through their association with a "controversial" comic.

Times have changed since **True Faith** (recalled by a nervous Robert Maxwell after publication because of alleged pressure from religious groups). It's a shame that those retro-culture hangers-on haven't changed with them. They, like Superman, are still living in an alternative reality. ●

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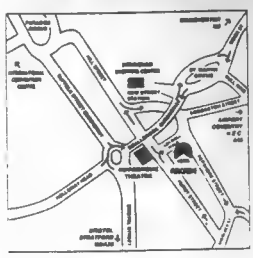

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COMMENT

***Comment** is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry.*

As such, the opinions stated do not necessarily reflect those of the publication, and space will be given in subsequent issues to opposing views. Editing of accepted manuscripts will be done only as a matter of grammar, clarity and space consideration.

Promoting the good stuff

Comment by Andy Roberts, London W11

INTERESTING COMMENT from Phil Hall (**Comics International** 21). His description of retailers' dilemmas over ordering sounds like a game of Russian roulette: under-order a hot title, and you could loose custom, over-order a turkey and you could go bankrupt.

The major comics publishers clearly hold retailers and readers in very low regard. Why bother, they reason, to announce creative teams when history dictates that characters, not creators, sell a title? Who cares who's drawing **X-Men**?

They have a point. And personally, I don't care much about the likes of Liefeld and McFarlane, neither of whom can write a decent script or draw convincing anatomy. Every retailer knows that there are far better comics, much more deserving of promotion; comics that could capture the much-sought-after general audience, if only people could see the stuff. But they also know that Marvel and DC are their bread-and-butter. How are they going to promote the good stuff when they need all the time they can spare to deal with the deluge of squandered trees regularly hurled at them by the big two and their hangers-on?

Obviously, the majors are in danger of cutting their own throats with their contemptuous attitude and massive over-confidence. I hope that happens. I hate most mainstream comics.

I'm no culture snob, but I just don't see any wit, joy or craftsmanship in most mainstream titles. They take themselves too seriously while laughing in the reader's face.

As for Image and Valiant -- take your pick: flashy amateurish crap, or dull, workmanlike crap. As a struggling creator with reasonably high standards, I'm disgusted by the arbitrary "collectability" of such bad or mediocre comics. And I'm saddened that the UK's trade press should be so speculator-oriented.

That's just my opinion. For the retailer, who presumably hoped that selling comics would be fun, ordering is now a major headache. Rather than all this guesswork, it would be preferable to have a consistent, predictable mainstream to rely on for healthy business. But where can you find that in today's comics industry?

You can't. So why bother? You want to sell good comics? Go ahead and forget about the majors, since they don't appear to care much about us.

Sell something *else* to keep your business afloat. In my area, beads'n'incense shops have sold **Freak Brothers** and other undergrounds for twenty years. Sell your comics alongside records, clothes or books, maybe. Start a cafe and leave your promo copies on the tables for customers to read! Sell **Eightball** in a pool hall, **Eyeball Kid** in an optician's, **Laundryland** in a laundrette!

The people won't come to comics until comics go to the people. So let's go! ●

In Defense of Spawn and Todd McFarlane

Comment by Tommy Kelly, Co. Louth

WITH REFERENCE to Peter C. Phillips' opinion of **Spawn** 1 (**Comics International 22**, *Reviews*): If **Spawn** is so bad, why is it selling so well? Why is it the second most commonly sold and demanded comic in America? And why have the prices of issue #1 and #2 gone up?

I don't like being called a "brain-dead '90s comics fan". I'm not brain-dead. I can enjoy a wide variety of comics (eg. **Cerebus, Love & Rockets, X-Men, Justice League**, etc.). I enjoyed **Spawn**, and I thought that it was full of story-telling: if it hadn't been you wouldn't have been able to work out that "a dead man returns to life, adopts a secret identity (which he didn't) and although suffering from amnesia, seeks out criminals (which he doesn't) and his lost (?) wife".

I think you got it all wrong. You'll probably put it down to bad story-telling, but I found nothing wrong with it.

Up until recently, I didn't like Todd McFarlane's work, but I was so impressed with **Spawn** that I changed my mind.

You obviously reviewed this comic having already made up your mind that you were going to hate it, no matter how good it was.

You have no right calling anyone "brain-dead", and I hope that you wake up and find out that just because someone has decided to cash in on their skills does not mean to say that they create books for people who are "brain-dead".

Whatever Todd McFarlane is doing, it has to be one hell of a lot better than reviewing comics for a living! ●

Kicking the hot book habit

Comment by Fraser Clubbe, Ford, Shropshire

I HAVE BEEN collecting comics for about three years now, and am responding to Max Cole (*Comment* **Comics International 20**). I am 15 years old and have the same sort of collection as him.

Up until a few months ago I was chasing my tail, trying to buy all the "hot" books as fast as I could. I was there with the rest of the hordes, buying five polybagged copies of the same comic just for the trading cards (**X-Force** 1).

This of course all got too much, what with Marvel and DC releasing more titles each month. I (and my bank account) could no longer keep up. So I decided to stop, got rid of all my junk and stuck to three titles from each of the big two publishers.

Perhaps if more people did this and gave up chasing gimmicks (which in 30 years will not have anything near the value that say, **Amazing Fantasy** 15 has today), Marvel would give up its 300 titles per month target. The very thought is sheer lunacy.

I have a piece of advice for all new collectors: get into Valiant and Image. They are starting in the same way as Marvel and DC did, with just a handful of titles and a new, growing universe. I have turned to them in my hour of need, as I'm sure many others have.

The situation in the market needs to be controlled, not just fuelled by Marvel and DC, whose long-term duty it should be to protect it. ●

A decline in standards

Comment by Nick Ford, Bath, Avon

FAR BE IT from me to comment on the artistic and creative merits of today's comics, but I have observed an alarming trend in myself which enables me to walk into a comics shop and *not want to buy anything*.

When I first started collecting in 1981, I would cycle seven miles to my nearest supplier and once there enter a pot pourri of delights, even though the shop in question was only the size of an average bathroom. As well as picking up my regular titles - typically X-related - there were guaranteed to be a number of other books which caught my eye - and eventually my wallet.

These notwithstanding, I would always leave the shop wanting more and resolve to come back with more money. This encouraged me to acquire a diverse collection early on. I liked the cover of the first issue of the **Gargoyle** mini-series for example, so I bought it not knowing who or what a Gargoyle was, but at least appreciating that some care and attention had gone into its creation. Sure enough, it proved to be a good read - who can ask anything more from this medium?

Going into a comics shop now, I am confronted with myriad titles. You know all the best names have gone when you see product such as **Terror Inc.**, **WildC.A.T.S** and their ilk. All have garish, busy covers that don't so much draw the eye as assault it. The innards are little better, with mangled, pneumatic limbs flailing wildly outside the constraints of each frame. Dialogue and plot are created by committee or robot and gone are the days of structure and concept as the artist struggles to incorporate yet more fight scenes.

This is perfectly illustrated by the majority of 1980s titles that survive today. Read, say, the Proteus saga in **X-Men** and then look at any recent X-saga: the human element has gone. At the time I thought Claremont was trite and messy with his unresolved plot-lines, but reading them in today's context I even miss him, at least his stories left you wanting more...

What has caused this decline in standards? I believe the reasons to be numerous, but chiefly:

(i) The Prestige Format - introduced by the "heavy" **Batman** trio: **The Cult**, **Dark Knight** and **Killing Joke**. This was an excellent idea, giving quality production to quality story-telling. However, it also provided greater profit margins for the publishers, hence a decline in the definition of "Prestige" to include **Deathlok**, **Critical Mass** and other pap.

(ii) The writer/artist: Comic art is immediate and can be examined at the point of purchase. Writing is more insidious and requires greater scrutiny - after you've bought it and got it home. Both are separate skills, learned and worked at. You wouldn't hire a plumber to build your extension, would you?

(iii) The increase in speciality shops (on the whole a good thing): Realising that there was a good business to be had through the direct sale market, the publishers have used this distribution channel to flood the market. It's a classic textbook strategy. There is no way that distribution could increase via big news trade chains - the profit per foot of shelf space can't justify it and unsolds would kill it.

(iv) Marketing: If I want to open a plastic bag, I'll buy a packet of crisps, not an **X-Force 1**. To my knowledge **The Beano** never put up its cover price when it gave away a "Space Spinner" or whatever. And why should it, it was a *free* gift. The marketing people in Marvel Head Office must laugh all the way to the bank. The bagged **Spider-Man** must have been one of the most successful sales promotions of all time *in any industry*. In terms of publicity, sales demand and brand awareness - great - but you couldn't even get at the comic to read it! It seems as if there is no respect for the reader any more. This is doubly ironic when one considers that the fundamental requirement of marketing is to establish and meet the customer's needs!

(v) Speculators: You have to mention the "collecting for profit" mentality of some comics fans. Draw

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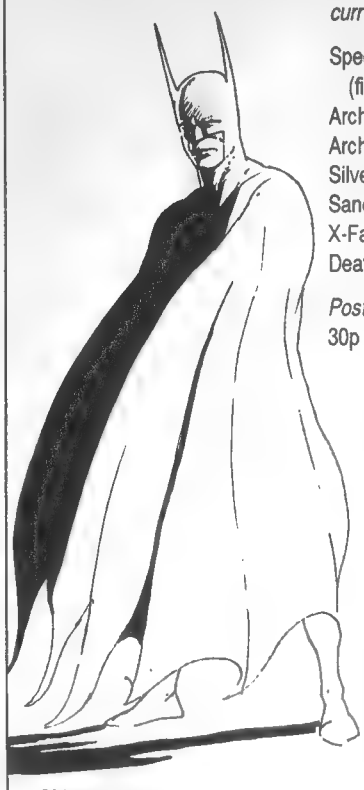

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your own conclusions about the logic of buying ten copies of the latest Spandex superstar. I'll be the first to agree that owning complete runs is great, but multiple copy purchases can only be bad for the industry (publishers might think that someone actually enjoyed the **Robin** mini-series), and bad for your pocket. If back issues were cheaper, wouldn't it encourage more buying of back issues and therefore a healthier stock rotation? Is the first possible appearance of Cable (when he was but a wire) in **X-Men 201** really worth £15?

(vi) The price: Doesn't anyone think that £1.20 for a new issue is a little expensive? I used to buy stuff like **The Gargoyle** because it was only 20p and you could get five comics for a pound. I know about the effects of inflation, but it seems that the economies of scale have been sidestepped by the big two. If the smaller companies can viably produce and distribute at £1.00 per issue, Marvel and DC with their print runs being many times those of the independents, should be able to sell far cheaper. Comics are clearly priced according to what the executives think the market can stand. Great for the shareholders, bad news for us.

Finally, I don't hate all comics. There is some great work out there, but I can't see one rising star amongst the Niciezas and Lobdells to get really excited about. Of course, the usual favourites still produce great work - Miller, Gaiman, Perez, Byrne, etc. But there hasn't been a single earth-shattering new mainstream writer for five years now and God knows, most titles need a kick up the backside at the moment. ●

Writing for Marvel: a cosy editor's club

Comment by Robert Melvin, Wortwell, Nr Harleston

RECENT EDITIONS of **Comics International** have carried readers' comments criticising the general state of writing in comics. This has ranged from generalised disgust, directed at the Liefeld script school through to the arrogant remarks of Keith Pottage (*Comment*, **Comics International 23**).

The point I wish to raise, with regard to Marvel Comics is that we are talking about very few pure writers. Look at the *Advance Listings* in the last issue of **Comics International**: McLaurin, Gruenwald (2 titles' credits each); Herdling, Fingeroth, Chichester (3); Nicieza (7); Nocenti, Mackie (5); Trusiani, Macchio, Budiansky, DeFalco (4); Hama (2) and Harras, Kaminski (3).

All these people are or were Marvel EDITORS. Between them, Marvel editors produce over thirty titles a month *in addition to* their editorial work. Of course, I have not included the contribution of Scott Lobdell.

I am not suggesting that editors, who are more familiar with writing than the majority of artists, should *not* be writing. The point is that it makes Marvel appear to be a very cosy writer's club. Imagine the ease with which you gain a script assignment, just pop into the next office and ask for it! Sometimes they produce great work, but it is more often mediocre.

X-Force is probably tired and bland simply because Nicieza writes too many titles - in addition to his other editorial duties whereas the majority of acclaimed writers are, to be realistic, not that prolific.

This editors' cartel also restricts the market for other writers outside of the chosen few. Marvel's submissions policy states that it takes many years of hard work to be ready to write for Marvel. Several years' hard work as an assistant editor, manager, or office boy?

This leaves Marvel with an inbred team of editors, former editors and a few good writers (Peter David, for example). The rest go to DC or the independents - check the *Reviews* section in **Comics International** and look at the scores.

On the other hand, look at who sells the most comics - how many people buy **The New Warriors** rather than **Sandman** or even **X-Force** rather than **X-Factor**.

It may be that I am wrong in my reasoning, and that any editor is a more commercial prospect than an outside writer - unless s/he is a major "name".

If this policy prevailed at DC to the same degree, we wouldn't have the mature readers titles, and Karen Berger would have taken over **Swamp Thing** after Alan Moore's departure, instead of Rick Veitch.

Then again, artists shouldn't be allowed to write anyway, especially that hack, Frank Miller. ●

Comics retailing: under pressure from the big two

Comment by Mike Kitson, Liverpool

WHAT A SPLENDID article Phil Hall contributed to **Comics International** 21. The man has my sympathy for the failure of his retailing business, and my admiration for his taking the opportunity to communicate to a wide audience his thoughts about *why* that business failed.

Given the importance of the issues he raised, might I add my own thoughts on the state of the British comics market and suggest a means by which some retailers may

escape the fate that's befallen Phil?

It certainly looks as though the answer to his question, "are the publishers driving shops into bankruptcy?" is yes, they are. As announced in previous issues of this magazine, Marvel is planning to release around 150 new titles during the remainder of 1992, and DC around 90. So Britain's 200 or so retailers are going to be faced with solicitations for nearly 250 titles *on top of* those they're already ordering. As Phil pointed out, every one of those titles is going to be hyped by the publishers and distributors alike. Obviously, only a handful of them are going to be as hot as the hype suggests. Just how can retailers guess - and it *is* guessing - which handful that will be?

Answer: they can't. And Marvel and DC know they can't. Their aim seems transparently obvious - to persuade retailers to stock the lot, as the only way of ensuring hitting the jackpot. That they'll be left with piles of deadweight overstocks is besides the point. That trying to pay for those overstocks may bankrupt many retailers is also besides the point. Even if distributors can't collect payment for all those orders from bankrupt businesses, Marvel and DC will still *have* to be paid, even if distributors may not have enough left for up-and-coming competitors like Image, Valiant, Dark Horse and Tundra. Making them wait, the big two will also have not-so-incidentally succeeded in another aim - diverting retailer capital away from competition.

If there's any truth in that somewhat cynical scenario, the retail scene in Britain will be looking very different in a year's time. Like Phil's, many small businesses will have been forced to close. The "big boys" - Stateside, Forbidden Planet and the like - will probably have been able to absorb the cost of overstocking duds and survive. And the drop in the number of retailers left will leave plenty of room for Marvel to implement a plan they've already announced for 1993 - the opening of their own retail chains.

All in all, it looks pretty bleak for the large number of small scale retailers, most of whom are in business because they actually like and care about comics. Is there any way out for them?

I've just recounted and embellished Phil's remarks about overstocking; the other reason he gave for comics shop failures was bad planning, specifically in terms of the choice of location. I'd like to suggest a third reason - one which could be avoided. And avoiding it is looking more and more worth considering.

Almost all British comics shops carry virtually the same stock. Can the same be said of any other mass market leisure retailing field? Large record shops, for example, carry identical stocks, but tend to be part of chains and are supported by TV and radio programming policies which more or less define "hot" sellers for them. (Moreover, they're rarely subjected to enormous release schedules like Marvel and DC's current pushes). Smaller record shops survive by offering specialist services; large secondhand or genre stocks - jazz, classical, indie and so on - less profitable than chart-bound releases, but still in demand and not catered for by the chain stores.

I cite record retailing because it provides a pretty clear-cut example of a principle of market diversification, also adhered to by booksellers and leisure hardware retailers (who specialise in particular brands). Would it be possible for some comics retailers to apply the same principle? On the face of it, it looks like a risky proposition. But just how many retailers have attempted to stock predominantly independent titles? Or translated BDs? Or even graphic novels? Has the risk been proved, or is it merely taken for granted that super-hero comics sell and others don't? In fact, super-hero comics don't sell very well - 40,000 regular buyers out of a population of 57 million doesn't count as market penetration! And the whole point of Phil's article (and this one) is that the major publishers' current actions are making super-hero comics more and more *un*safe. Might it be time for retailers to start considering other options?

I believe that retailers already in business *could* switch from super-hero stocks to alternatives and survive, that they *must* if comics retailing in this country is to flourish and progress. A possible method of transition might be to cease ordering all but proven best-sellers, to advertise massively cut-price sales of current stock in every medium available (including local papers and listings magazines), to price those sales so as to undercut competitors but still pay outstanding distributor and landlord bills, and to advertise, again as widely as possible, the nature of the intended specialist service. Advertising is the key to this suggestion. While many old customers would no longer be catered for, new ones could be attracted: horror fans looking for a complete range to suit their interests, or young adults who've heard of Clowes, Bagge, the Hernandez Brothers, Doucet and all the "arty" others, but have been unable to find regular supplies of their work. Or even that elusive ol' adult audience which doesn't frequent comics shops because it isn't interested in super-hero comics...

I confess that I don't know the hard, brass-tacks practicability of the above, and I'd like to hear from retailers about how workable they think it might be. I certainly reckon that it's an attractive alternative to Phil's suggestion that we all ask Marvel and DC to loosen the vice. And as that vice is being screwed tighter and tighter, can retailers who care about the comics medium and wish to stay in business afford not to consider any alternative to the increasingly intolerable pressure? ●

Once again, we have been inundated with your submissions to ***Comment****. We have increased the allocated space and thank you for your opinions. We hope to have caught up with the backlog by next issue.*

Dez Skinn/Editor

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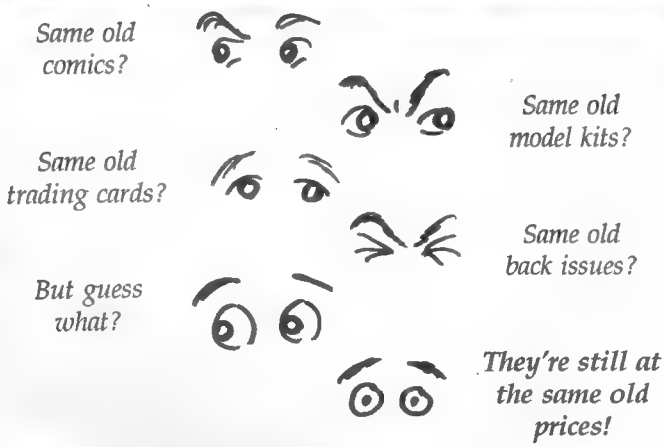
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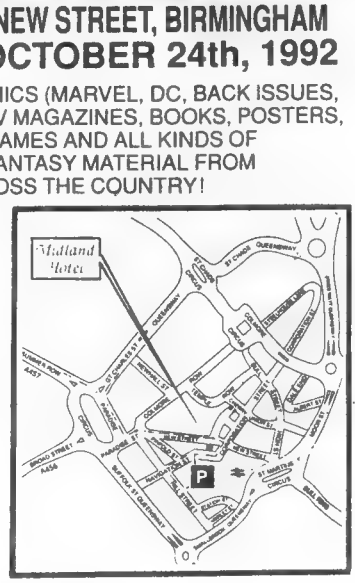

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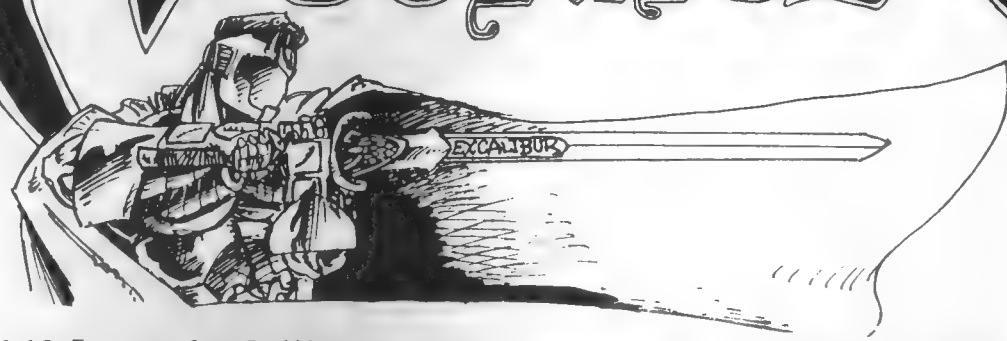

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All prices of US titles are dollar prices. Where dollar and stirling prices (ie. $1.00/50p) is stated, title will be distributed approximately 3 months after the slightly more expensive air freighted copies, which are sold in the UK simultaneously to USA.. Because of additional costs in air freight shipping, advance copies are sold at a price based on dollar value.

Shipping date is usually one week before copies arrive at your retailer/mail order supplier. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate, as provided by publishers. Late shipping and cancellations will be detailed in future issues of ***Comics International.***

Key to abbreviations used:
1 & 2 + 3 = Writer & penciller + inker
***sqbd** = perfect bound; squared spine; without staples*
***b&w** = black & white content*
***pc** = part-colour content*
***hbk** = hardback (book) edition*
***tpbk** = trade paperback, squarebound comicbook sized*
***Xpg** = X number of interior pages*
***V** = violence; **N** = nudity; **S** = sex*

SHIPPING:
OCTOBER 1992

All comics are 32 page colour titles unless stated otherwise

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

<> **Cerebus 163** (Sim & Gerhard) *Mothers and Daughters: Women, Part 1* (of 12) Cerebus retires to a bar while the occupational Mothers' force confronts the revolutionary Daughters. b&w $2.25

AC COMICS

<> **Femforce 54** (Black & Ayers + Heike) Nightveil's inner sanctum contains a cache of mysterious objects, amongst which is the Orb of Bliss. The Fightenstein Monster finds the Orb - which has the property of making anyone who holds it appear trustworthy - and only brain-damaged Synn has any hope of *not* being deceived by him... But, all is not lost: Bulldog Deni looms on the horizon. b&w $2.75

<> **Femforce Frightbook 1** (anthology) Halloween special, featuring: *The Report; River of Blood; The Flower Women* and the Golden Age story of Ms Victory and Lady Luger's confrontation with the Fightenstein Monster. b&w $2.95

<> **Jungle Girls 10** (anthology) Features: *Tara; Cave Girl* (reprint); *Nyoka and the Flying Serpent.* Cover: Black. b&w $2.95

ADVENTURE

<> **Dracula: The Suicide Club 3** (of 4; S. Jones & Ross) Inspector Harrison and his men bust the Suicide Club - and find the remnants of his forward task force. b&w $2.50

<> **Merlin 1** (of 2; R.Jones & R. Davis) Merlin comes to the aid of Tyron at Rhiannon's impassioned behest and, because Tyron is "otherworldly", agrees to protect him from the Druids bent on sacrificing him to their deity. b&w $2.50

<> **Monster Posse 1** (of 4; Boone) Four alien kids crash-land in New York's Central Park and are bemused by the street life they discover in the city. Rosie Rockyajocca comes to their aid, and just as they're growing accustomed to the hurly-burly, their robotic truant officer arrives to escort them back to their home world. b&w $2 50

<> **Sherlock Holmes: Return of the Devil 2** (of 2; Powell & Makinen) The game isn't so much as afoot as up in this morality-tale issue. Holmes discovers that England's supply of cocaine - on which he's dependent - is being poisoned. Everything depends on Holmes's ability to solve the case without the aid of the drug. b&w $2.50

ARCHIE COMICS

<> **Archie 407** $1.25

<> **Archie Americana Series: Best of '50s** Re-coloured. 96pg $8.95

<> **Archie Andrews Where Are You? Digest 14** $1.50

<> **Archie's Story & Game Digest 26** $1.50

<> **Archie's Double Digest 63** $2.50

<> **Betty & Veronica 59** $1.25

<> **Betty & Veronica Digest 59** $1.50

<> **Betty & Veronica Spectacular 2** $1.25

<> **Jughead 41** $1.25

<> **Jughead-Archie Dble Digest 114** $2.50

<> **Laugh Digest 105** $1.50

<> **Sonic the Hedgehog 0** (Castiglia & Shaw) Adapt from Sega Genesis video game. $1.25

<> **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Adventures 40** (Clarrain & Allan) $1.25

<> **TMNT Adventures Special 3** 64pg $2.50

<> **TMNT Presents: April O'Neil 1** $1.25

<> **Wild West C.O.W.Boys of Moo Mesa 2** (of 3; Brammer & Fields + McArdle) Adaptation of the ABC Western series. $1.25

<> **World of Archie 3** $1.25

CALIBER PRESS

<> **Caliber Presents: Petit Mal** (C. Regan) Features four short SF/horror stories by new creator Regan: *Carvers; Jungle; Shadowdrome* and an anecdote about a Hell-bound journey. b&w $2.95

<> **Channel X #1** (Iconografix; Baxter) Collection of short stories, featuring: *Those Ever-Popular Torqued-Out Maniacs in Monster City; I Fear the Thing; Mack the Knife* and *Perfect Creep.* Mature readers. b&w $2.95

<> **Champions of the Round Table** (Tome; Howard Pyle) Collected reproductions of Pyle's fantasy illustrations. b&w 48pg $3.50

<> **Dante's Inferno 3** (Tome; Dore) Rescheduled. Third and final part of this collection of the translated *Divine Comedy*, with illustrations by nineteenth-century artist Gustave Dore. b&w $3.50

<> **Deadworld: To Kill a King 3** (Garrett & McCain) The successor to the Zombie throne is hungry for vengeance for the death of his antecedent - for which the Dead killer was responsible. b&w $2.95

<> **Electric Ballet 3** (Jillson) Zonnefro launches himself on a guilt-ridden and desperate mission to rescue the eight innocents he's sent to almost certain death on a planet where humans, as a species have been purged into extinction. b&w $2.50

<> **The Fantastic Art of Brueghal** (Tome Press) Rescheduled. Collection of work by the seminal medieval Dutch artist Pieter Brueghal. Includes his now famous, horrific visualisations of Hell, inspired by the contemporary teachings of the Christian church. b&w $3.50

<> **Godcrasher 2** (Gauntlet; Yates) Having barely escaped from GOD's peace-dogs, Ian, Candy and Rock face the unknown, in Planet Hellhole's sewers. Mature readers. $2.50

<> **Gutter Rat 1** (Gauntlet; Sneioski & Masztal) Gutter Rat is, it seems, God's Angel of Vengeance. Ignorant of his official role in God's scheme of things, Gutter gets on with championing the cause of the homeless and protecting them from "evil forces" that surround them... Available in signed, limited edition. Mature readers. b&w $2.95/$5.95

<> **Krey 4** (of 5; Gauntlet; Mann & Wyman) Krey crosses the Rubicon by leaving the Red Guard, and thus setting himself up as a target for the Stalk Hunters. b&w $2.50

<> **Marauder 1** (Gauntlet; S. Williams & Renick + Napolitano) New series from Silverline Studios. Judas Rathbone, or the Vulture has his sights set on global finance domination, recruiting - with prejudice - anyone who might be useful along the way. Only the as yet unrevealed Marauder can protect computer expert Jasmine Stowe from the Vulture's acquisitive binge. b&w $2.50

<> **Mr Trianglehead 2** (of 3; ? & ?) More from that scourge of the '90s, the power-hungry, unbelievable inverted pyramid. Mature readers. b&w $2.50

<> **Mutant Bikers from Hell 1** (Duarte) New series parodying the super-hero team genre. b&w $2.50

<> **The Saga of the Realm 1** (G. Davis) Reprint of the 1985 **Realm** series. b&w $2.50

<> **Scan 2** (of 2; Iconografix; Howarth) Alex Frost, now manifested as a man, reveals secret information to Miranda. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

<> **Shadowtown 3** (Iconografix; Anthony) Did's faced with a conundrum when, on Malcolm X Day, her friend Rebbie tells her that she is a covert leader of the revolutionary militia. Did's finally got to throw in her lot with the government or the rebels... Mature readers. b&w $2.50

<> **Taras Bulba 2** (of 3; Tome; adaptation: Thayer & Nixey) Second part of the series derived from the Russian classic novel by Nikolai Gogol. The conflict between the Cossack and Polish forces continues as the nineteenth-century battle for the ownership of the Russian Steppes, to dominate Eastern European politics for years to come, draws to its bloody climax. b&w $2.95

<> **Total Quivers** (Bendis) Collected mini-series, based on the fantasy of a band of Amazons moving into Cleveland in order to launch a war on men only. Mature readers. b&w 96pg $4.95

<> **Very Vicky 2** (Iconografix; Mitchell & Christy) Sophisticated New York teenager Vicky struggles to come to terms with sunburn, cheap beer and religious fanaticism after her move to "the cutting edge of nowhere", the Sun Belt. Mature readers. b&w $2.50

COMICO

<> **Elementals: The Natural Order** (trade ppbk) Rescheduled. Reprinted in celebration of the 50th issue of the series. Version "A" contains free Kelley Jones poster and the limited edition of version "B" **Monolith** 1 and **Vortex** 1. 160pg $13.95/$14.95

<> **Elementals Commemorative Portfolio** (Kieth, Davis, Akins, Hughes, Jones) Rescheduled. Published in celebration of the **Elementals**' 50th issue. pc $15.95

<> **Fathom 2** (of 3; Mann & Akins, Leeke + Van Wormer) Rescheduled. Fathom pleads with the Elementals to help her protect Walker (and his dolphin offspring) from the Kraken. But while her back's turned, Lord Oblivion's forces slip in and succeed in kidnapping her wearisome protege... Continues in **Strike Force America** 2. $2.50

<> **Kelley Jones Portfolio 1** Rescheduled. Collected artwork by Jones, whose work has appeared in **Sandman, Deadman Batman v Dracula** and **Grimjack.** $19.95

<> **Strike Force America 2** (Mann & Van Wormer) Rescheduled. While Thor sets Walker free (continued story-line from **Fathom** 2), the Force launches an attack on Oblivion's forces on Nacht Island and Ratman is revealed as a traitor. Also includes a pin-up gallery "by top Marvel and DC artists". Cover: Hugh Haynes. $2.50

CONTINUITY

Continuity titles are reduced this month due to shipping problems.

<> **Crazyman 5** (Stone & Barry + Bennett) Previously unsolicited issue. *Inmate: Part 2.* Crazyman fights with the enigmatic #2 in order to save his equally enigmatic hero. Cover: Adams and Bennett. $2.50

DARK HORSE

<> **The American: Lost in America 4** (of 4; Verheiden & Marrinan + Garvey) Former American's girlfriend and reporter Dennis Hough attempt to hold the line as the Mask Cult go Ape in Lincoln, Oregon.

<> **Baseball Greats 1: The Jimmy Piersall Story** (Arcudi & Dwyer, Guinan + Garvey) First of new series chronicling the careers of "sports greats" (to be overseen by Piersall). 8 free trading cards with this issue, with random insertions of autographed cards. $2.95

<> **The Blue Witch of Oz** (Shanower) Picked up from the failed First Publishing's roster, Shanower's fifth (and rescheduled) fifth **Oz** graphic novel. Dorothy, the Scarecrow and the Glass Cat make a great journey to rescue the God Witch of the East from a mysterious, spell-induced paralysis. 48pg $9.95

<> **Caravan Kidd 4** (Manabe) Babo faces a dilemma in which he's forced to choose between friendship and money. b&w $2.50

<> **Cheval Noir 35** Featuring: *The Man from the Ciguri, Part 8* (Moebius); *In Search of Peter Pan* (Cosey); *The Birthday* (Cossu & Jamain); *The Angriest Dog in the World* (Lynch). Cover: Kayanan. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

<> **Classic Star Wars 3** (Goodwin & Williamson) Reformatted collection of 1980s newspaper strips. Cover: Williamson. $2.50

<> **Dark Horse Comics 3** Featuring: *Aliens: Horror Show* (Byam & Roach); *Indiana Jones and the Shrine of the Sea-Devil* (Gianni); *Robocop* (Arcudi & Leon + Albrecht); *Time Cop* (Verheiden & Losey + Warner). Cover: Roach. 32pg $2.50

<> **Dark Horse Presents 67** Double, anniversary issue, featuring: *Predator, Part 1* (of 3; Vacchs & Stradley, Raskin + Beatty; to spin off into new series **Predator: Race War**); *An Accidental Death* (Brubaker & Shanower); *The Selfish Giant* (adaptation of Oscar Wilde's story by P. Craig Russell); *Money for Nothing* (Duffy & Sakamoto); *Zoo-Lou vs Editor*

(Hedden & McWeeney). Cover: Lago. Mature readers. 64pg $3.95

<> **Deadface: Earth, Water, Air and Fire 4** (of 4; Campbell) The Eyeball Kid aids Bacchus, Theseus and the gang bust a Sicilian jail's security, and Simpson disappears, leaving a mystical revelation behind him. Cover: Campbell. Mature readers. b&w 32pg $2.50

<> **Dr Giggles 1** (Grant & Burles + Burrows) Horror title, based on a character previously introduced in **Dark Horse Presents**. In a story-line adapted from the (Largo/Dark Horse Entertainment) film, alter ego Rendell returns to smalltownsville Moorehigh to set up a practice. Dr Giggles takes the opportunity to savour a little sweet revenge. $2.95

<> **Dr Giggles 2** (of 2; Grant & Burles + Burrows) Conclusion of the comics adaptation of the eponymous Largo/Dark Horse Entertainment film. $2.50

<> **Grendel: War Child 3** (of 10; Wagner & McEown + Mireault) In the hope of salvation, Grendel and young ward Jupiter Assante struggle across the Louisiana swamps, meeting instead what turns out to be a disagreeable old witch. Cover: Bisley. Mature readers. $2.50

<> **Herbie 2** (anthology) Includes *Big Fat Mess at the Okay Corral* and *George Washington's Teeth*; some reprint material by Ogden Whitney along with new strips by McWeeney and Hedden. $2.50

<> **James Bond 007: Serpent's Tooth 3** (of 3; Moench & Gulacy) James Bond and his coterie of women and weapons invade Indigo's halcyon New Eden. Mature readers. 48 pages $4.95

<> **The Mask Returns 2** (of 4; Arcudi & Mahnke) Heroine Kathy stands alone against The Mask when he steams into a violent crime-fest. $2.50

<> **The New Frontier 1** (of 3; Cherkas & Sabljic) A **Heavy Metal**-originated story-line, adapted and elongated into this mini-series telling the story of repercussions of the death of internationally-adored film star, Rubi Fields. Mature readers. b&w 32pg $2.75

<> **New Hope For the Deadline USA 7** Compilation, with new material, of work originally published in the UK anthology title. Mature readers. b&w 48pg $3.95

<> **Next Men 8** (Byrne) The Next Men take on their eastern counterparts when Control lends them to the head of Russia's Omega project to bring his maverick agents under control $2.50

<> **Nexus the Liberator 3** (of 4; Petrucha & Calimee + Nyberg) Despite being executed by Nexus, the Holy Gigo is still alive. This provokes an Armageddon-like reaction amongst the people of Uyl (war, pestilence, etc.) in a story-line which leads into the new **Nexus** mini-series due later in 1992. Cover: Portacio and Dorscheid. $2.50

<> **Predator v Magnus Robot Fighter 1** (of 2; Valiant/ Dark Horse; ? & Weeks) Co-production, in which the trophy hunter visits Magnus's 41st-century home in order to part the X-O Manowar helmet from its owner (in much the same way as a fox might loose its head in nineteenth-century England). Cover: Barry Windsor-Smith. $2.95

<> **Primal 1** (of 4; Barker + Chichester & Saltzgaber) Continuation of the **Primal: From the Cradle to the Grave** story-line. Thanks to Myde the Riven's influence, old Massachussetts has mysteriously regressed to the period of the Salem Witch Trials... T. J. Cyrus has been swept along with this regression - in the company of Myde herself. Mature readers. $2.95

<> **Robocop: Prime Suspect 1** (Arcudi & Leon + Albrecht) One-shot, in which one of the fiercest critics of Robocop's cybernetics systems - electronics businessman Insane Izzy - is murdered. Robocop finds himself the subject of the ensuing investigation. $2.50

<> **Spacehawk 4** (Wolverton) Spacehawk comes to terms with Queen Haba's shenanigans. Cover: Wolverton. b&w $2.25

<> **The Terminator: Endgame 2** (of 3; Robinson & Guice + Beatty) Colonel Mary Randall finds out why half-Terminators didn't make the grade when Dudley starts to disintegrate, just as they focus on the task of saving Connor's life once again. Cover: Higgins. $2.50

<> **The Terminator: Endgame 3** (of 3; Robinson & Guice + Beatty) The end of everything for the Dark Horse/Terminator trail with an hiatus: it's the day of John Connor's birth at Odessa Hospital; the survival of the human race rests on the outcome of this next 24 hours... Cover: Higgins. $2.50

<> **The Terminator: Secondary Objectives** Collecting **Terminator: Secondary Objectives** 1-4, continued from **Terminator: Tempest**. Cover: Gulacy. Mature readers. 112pg $13.95

<> **The Thing: Climate of Fear 4** (of 4; Arcudi & Somerville + R. Jones) Ready uncovers the Thing's plan to travel to other, more populous hunting-grounds. Cover: Higgins. $2.50

<> **Twister 1** (of 4; Harris Publications; Hudnall & Koeb) First of a new horror series based on the sombre activities of the Twister, who preys on the now familiar predators of humanity: the serial killers. But even this big flea has fleas on his back to bite him - the FBI, view his vigilantism with something less than enthusiastic approval. $2.95

<> **Vampirella 1** (Busiek & Harris)

<> **The Venus Wars II 5** (Yasuhiko) Terran Space Force officer Helen MacLuth arrives in Matthew and Lupica's "lurve nest" retreat, bearing offers of peace. But it's not going to happen with the Rado assassins' remit as it stands. Cover: Stelfreeze & Story. b&w $2.25

<> **The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles 9** (Barry & Mushynsky) Indiana manages to insert himself into yet another wedge of history when, while visiting Vienna in 1908, he falls in love with Archduke Franz Ferdinand's daughter. Jones takes the very best advice (Freud, Jung and Adler just happen to be on hand) but still manages to act like a novice... It's a good job that he didn't come along six years later!! $2.50

DC COMICS

SHIPPING SEPTEMBER 22nd

<> **Batman: Shadow of the Bat 6** (A. Grant & Jurgens + Giordano) Rescheduled. Crypto-fascist The Ugly American is the scourge of Gotham City, terminating (with extreme prejudice) those who oppose his views. Batman's problem is that he's got to deal with him, but isn't sure *how* to... Cover: Stelfreeze. $1.50

SHIPPING OCTOBER 6th

<> **The Titans Sell-Out Special 1** (Wolfman & Erwin + Vey, various) *Titans Sell-Out, Part 1* (of 4). One-shot continuation of the *Total Chaos* story, to be continued in **Deathstroke, the Terminator, The New Titans** and **Team Titans**. Topicality dominates as the two Titans team find Deathstroke dead and their credibility destroyed with the Federal authorities on their backs. A media tycoon offers to re-shape their image and makes them a merchandising offer they can't refuse. Includes a free Nightwing poster. 48pg $3.50

SHIPPING OCTOBER 13th

<> **Batman: Prey** (tpbk; Moench & Gulacy + Austin) Reprinted **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight** 11-15. Introduction by Archie Goodwin. Cover: Gulacy. 136pg $12.95

<> **Batman: Shadow of the Bat 7** (A. Grant & Sale) *The Failures, Part 1* (of 3). In a story originally scheduled to appear in **Batman: Shadow of the Bat** 6, Batman and new hero Nimrod the Hunter confront a hostile alliance of Catwoman, Calendar Man, Killer Moth and novel villain Chancer. $1.50

<> **Batman: Sword of Azrael 3** (O'Neil & Quesada + Nowlan) While Azrael and Alfred form an alliance of convenience to track down the demon, Bruce Wayne's psyche is under attack from Biis - and already his big secret has been discovered. $1.75

<> **The Black Hood 12** (Wheatley & Snejbjerg) *The History of a Rag*: final issue of the series, in which Black Hood's origin is revealed as Nate Cray is subjected to interrogation by an armoured agent. $1.25

<> **Deathstroke, the Terminator 17** (Wolfman & Erwin + Blyberg) *Titans Sell-Out, Part 2* (of 4). Deathstroke is miraculously brought back from the dead - and has a new costume to celebrate his resurrection. Just in time, too, as Slade Wilson's body has been stolen by the revived Brotherhood of Evil. $1.75

<> **Flash 71** (Waid & LaRoque + Richardson) Flash is unwillingly undertakes the protection of a Mafia informant threatened by Dr Alchemy. $1.25

<> **Green Lantern: Mosaic 7** (G. Jones & Hamner + Panosian) Located on the Mosaic world, John Stewart makes a disturbing discovery when he intervenes in a conflict between two alien factions. $1.25

<> **Hawkworld 29** (Ostrander & Duursema + B. Jones) *Flight's End, Part 3* (of 6). Katar and Shayera - effectively declared outlaws by the US government - are forced to do battle with the original Hawkman and Hawkgirl. Meanwhile krypto-Ku Klux Klanner The White Dragon takes the opportunity to pursue his own, destructive agenda. $1.75

<> **Justice League International Quarterly 9** (Waid & Whigham + DeCarlo, various) Lead story focuses on the League's imprisonment with a rebellious scientist and the consequences of their exposure to a dangerous virus. Backing strips include: *Power Girl* (P. Kupperberg & Abell + Wiacek); *Crimson Fox* (Dooley & A. Smith); *Booster Gold* (Maggin & Cockrum + Marzan Jr). Cover: A Smith. 80pg $3.50

<> **Peter Cannon: Thunderbolt 4** (M. Collins & Marzan Jr) Featuring the former Charlton Comics character. Evila's psychic interrogation of Cannon continues. $1.25

<> **Shade, the Changing Man 30** (Milligan & Eagleson) *Another Life*. Shade returns (via an alternative reality) to Meta, and is able to derive some much-needed emotional support there. Cover: Bachalo. Mature readers. $1.75

<> **The Spectre 1** (Ostrander & Mandrake) First of a new ongoing series in which the Spectre returns to the scene of his own death and exacts retribution on his murderer. $1.95

<> **Star Trek 41** (Weinstein & Whigham + Starr) *Runaway*. The discovery of an "energy anomaly" in unchartered space has dire consequences for the Enterprise. $1.75

<> **Superman: The Man of Steel 18** (L. Simonson & Bogdanove + Janke) *Doomsday, Part 1* (of 6). Superman faces a crisis in his life as an apocalypse approaches. Continues in **Superman** 74 and ties in with **Justice League America** 69. $1.25

<> **Valor 2** (Fleming & Bright + Gordon) Lex Luthor sends his new thrall, Supergirl, to capture the lost-in-time Legionnaire. $1.25

<> **Wonder Woman 69** (Messner-Loebs & Cullins + Campanella) *Exodus into Space, Part 3* (of 5). Diana, Tasha and Sangtee form a government-busting crew, capturing starships and helping the rebels to escape their oppressors for a new life in the stars. Cover: Bolland. $1.25

SHIPPING OCTOBER 20th

<> **Aquaman 13** (McLaughlin & Schreck + Dvorak) A terminally-ill boy searches for Aquaman, convinced that he has some kind of curative powers. His hero, meanwhile, contemplates a confrontation with an old enemy, the Scavenger. $1.25

<> **Batman 487** (Moench & Aparo) *Box of Blood*. Contract killer the Headhunter targets Commissioner Gordon, and Batman races against time to get to the policeman before his assassin does. $1.25

<> **Deadman: Exorcism 1** (of 2; Baron & K. Jones) First part of a further Prestige format mini-series, in which mad but not bad Boston Brand ekes out a spectral existence in a deserted New England church, his only diversion being to occupy any bodies that might enter his hermit's retreat. Only the Phantom Stranger, Madam Waxahatchie, can save Deadman (and, incidentally, the world) by importing a Bostonian psychiatrist to dig into the quasi-spectre's mind, uncovering the terrible secret at the root of his current problems... Mature readers. 48pg $4.95

<> **The Demon 30** (Grant & Hedden + McWeeney) From his too-hot-to-handle life in Hell, Asteroth emerges to a distinctly uncool existence as a gas station attendant on Earth. $1.75

<> **Eclipso 2** (Giffen, Fleming & Sears + Pennington) Eclipso consolidates his power base in South America, and his target - world domination (what else?) is looking increasingly achievable. $1.25

<> **Green Lantern Corps Quarterly 3** (Friedman & Cockrum + Vancata) *Depth Charges* sees the empowering of a marine leader through the acquisition of a power ring. Back-up strips include: *Alan Scott* (Stern & Abell + McKenna); *G'nort* (Bailey & James + Pepoy); *Whatever Happened to... Charlie Vickers?* (G. Jones & Hamilton + Tanghal). Cover: Cockrum & Vancata. 64pg $2.50

<> **The Hacker Files 5** (of 12; Shiner & Sutton + Buckingham) *Operation Moonwitch, Part 1* (of 2). The Speed Metal Kids are imprisoned, and the Hacker (not being the sort of hero to bust them out of jail) employs in their stead the former Batgirl, Barbara Gordon - now known as Oracle. Justice Leaguer Catherine Colbert makes a guest appearance. Cover: Thomas Canty. $1.95

<> **Hammerlocke 4** (of 9; Joyner & Sprouse + Wilson) While Sahara Skyhawk and Cactus Jaq prepare for a kamikaze mission to Antarctica, Hammerlocke prepares for a confrontation with his nemesis, the Iron Spider, by reviving the memory of the day he lost his humanity. $1.75

<> **The Heckler 4** (Giffen & T. & M. Bierbaum, Giffen & Lewis) The Heckler negotiates his way around the traps set for him in Delta City by the Bushwacker who, having heard of the price on the Heckler's head, is determined to collect - one way or the other. $1.25

<> **Hellblazer 60** (Ennis & W. Simpson, DeMulder + Barreiro) *Guys & Dolls, Part 2* (of 3). Constantine unveils the story of his first meeting with the demon Ellie in 1984, when he helped her out with a minor problem involving, among other things, the forces of Heaven and Hell. Another day, another dollar... Cover: Fabry. Mature readers. $1.75

<> **Justice League America 69** (Jurgens & Burchett) Continued story-line from **Superman: Man of Steel** 18. The Leaguers wait - with increasing concern - for Superman's help in deflecting the apocalyptic Doomsday. Continues in **Superman** 74 $1.25

<> **Legion of Super-Heros Archives vol 2** Reprinting the 1963-4 **Adventure Comics** 306-317, featuring the first appearances of Element Lad, Lightning Lass, Dream Girl and the Legion of Substitute Heroes. Intro by Paul Levitz. Cover: Swan & Kesel. 224pg $39.95

<> **Legion of Super-Heroes 37** (T. & M. Bierbaum & Brigman + Dell) All-American story, (through to #39) featuring the revival of one-time Legionnaires Star Boy and Dream Girl in a 30th Century baseball game... $1.75

<> **New Titans 93** (Wolfman & Grummett + Vey) *Titans Sell-Out, Part 3* (of 4) Continuation of the topical story-line, in which the merchandising deal signed as part of the re-shaping of the Titans' image takes off with *Teeny Titans: The Cartoon Show*. $1.75

<> **Sandman 44** (Gaiman & Thompson + Locke) *Brief Lives, Part 4*. Sandman helps Delirium in the search for sibling Destruction, and Corinthian makes an unwelcome

appearance. Cover: McKean. Mature readers. $1.50

<> **Superman 74** (Jurgens & Breeding) *Superman: Doomsday, Part 2* (of 6). Nothing, it seems, can halt the advance of Doomsday on Metropolis. Continues in **Adventures of Superman** 497. $1.25

SHIPPING OCTOBER 27th

<> **Adventures of Superman 497** (Ordway & Grummett + Hazelwood) *Superman: Doomsday, Part 3* (of 6). The Justice League is defeated, and Superman's position looking untenable. Continues in **Action** 684. $1.25

<> **Animal Man 54** (Delano & Pugh) *Flesh & Blood, Part 4* (of 7). Animal Man becomes increasingly uncertain that he will ever regain his human status. Cover: Bolland. Mature readers. $1.75

<> **Arion, The Immortal 6** (of 6; Kupperberg & Wilson + Gustavich) Arion fights with the ancient Atlantean forces in Darkworld, striving to save Earth from a return to former, darker days. Guest appearance by Arion's granddaughter, Power Girl. $1.50

<> **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 40** (Bryan Talbot) *Mask, Part 2.* (of 2) Bruce Wayne's suffering in the de-tox created world continues - not only is he having to come to terms with his alter ego as a product of delirium tremens but, having escaped the unit, finds himself outside in a new, Beirut-like Gotham City. $1.75

<> **The Black Condor 7** (Augustyn & Morales + Space) The Condor discovers a band of desperadoes and an horrific creature in the midst of a forest fire. $1.25

<> **Congorilla 2** (of 4; Englehart & Vokes + Geldhof) Congo Bill steams into the heart of the jungle to attempt to dismantle the brutal and corrupt empire set up by Congorilla. Cover: Bolland. $1.75

<> **Green Lantern 34** (G. Jones & Bright + Tanghal) *The Third Law, Part 2* (of 3). Hal battles futilely against the animate black dome covering the New Guardians' island. Introduces a new DC villain, Entropy, who threatens to attack Oa's power base. $1.25

<> **L.E.G.I.O.N. '92 48** (Kitson, R. Smith) Lobo (naturally enough) blows Stealth's cover when she investigates a slavery racket run by aliens. Cover: Kitson. (RO) $1.75

<> **Lobo: Infanticide 3** (of 4; A. Grant & Giffen) Lobo fights - under protest - with (rather than against) his disinherited bastards when the "military base" is besieged by an invasion force. Mature readers. $1.50

<> **Star Trek: The Next Generation 41** (Friedman & Davis + Marcos) Crisis for the starship Enterprise approaches, as the saucer and propulsion units are exposed to the weapons of the Sztazzan warships. $1.75

<> **Streets 1** (of 3; Hudnall & Estes) First of three-issue stand-alone Prestige format books, *Tenderloin* is the story of a classic angst-ridden, alcoholic detective, who goes against all protocol to investigate a series of killings. Mature readers. 48pg $4.95

<> **Swamp Thing 126** (Foreman & Eaton + DeMulder) Comic-within-a-comic story, with Swamp Thing undertaking a (professional interest) rescue mission when he revives an underground comix creator with artist's block by appearing to him as a comics character. Cover: Higgins. Mature readers. $1.75

<> **Team Titans 4** (Wolfman & Maguire + Blyberg) *Titans Sell-Out, Part 4* (of 4). In the continued wish-fulfilment story-line, The Titans get a little over-stressed in their struggle to come to terms with their new popularity: Battalion assumes command, Killowatt's got the hots for Miri and Troia joins up. $1.75

<> **Tell Me Dark** (hbk; K. Wagner & Rieber + K. Williams) Horror novelist Karl Wagner's first foray into the comics arena is the story of a man obsessed by the unexplained loss of his lover, Barbara Flick. When he begins his search for her, the nightmares begin... Cover: Kent Williams. Mature readers. 80pg $29.95

SHIPPING NOVEMBER 3rd

<> **Action Comics 684** (Stern & Guice + Rodier) *Superman: Doomsday, Part 4* (of 6). The futile attempts to prevent Doomsday reaching Metropolis continue. Continues in **Superman: Man of Steel** 19. $1.25

<> **The Batman Adventures 3** (Puckett & Templeton, Burchett) Based on a story from the Fox TV *Batman* series, Batman undergoes ritual humiliation when the Joker pulls off his best-publicised stunt yet: he kidnaps Batman and unmasks him on live TV. $1.25

<> **Blackhawk Special 1** (Ostrander & Vosburg) Blackhawk time-travels from Kennedy's assassination in '63 to Saigon's fall in 1975 in a vengeance-driven quest to find the killer of a predecessor. Mature readers. 64pg $3.50

<> **The Comet 18** (Waid & West + Albrecht) Final issue, in which Comet give his best shot at ridding himself of the enigmatic fourth alien, thus keeping his humanity. $1.25

<> **The Crusaders 8** (? & Wojkiewicz + Lowe) DC uses one story to finish two titles, with this final issue of **The Crusaders** crossing over with the last **Comet** as the Crusaders are called in to pursue the Comet, who stands accused of murder. $1.00

<> **The Darkstars 3** (Friedman & Stroman + Hanna) Colo, fresh from victory in the "Loco" drug war, enlists Mo and Flint to deputise in a confrontation with Evil Star. $1.75

<> **Detective Comics 654** (Dixon & Netzer + Hanna) *The General, Part 1* (of 3). An adult paranoia issue, in which Batman faces legions of kid street gangs activated when the psyche of The General is implanted in the brain of an 11-year-old boy. $1.25

<> **Doom Patrol 62** (Morrison & Case + Woch) Although the Chief is dead (and headless) his nanotechnology machinations live on, and the remaining members of the Patrol have to conduct a clean-up operation to rid the planet of the Chief's legacy, once and for all. Cover: Bisley. Mature readers. $1.50

<> **The Fly 17** (Strazewski & Parobeck + Fricke) Another final issue, in which the Fly, threatened with assassination by Arachnus and Chromium, decides to take the easy option and buzz off. If only life were as simple as that for other comics characters... $1.25

<> **Green Arrow 69** (Grell & Hoberg + Nyberg) *Reunion Tour, Part 1* (of 2). Green Arrow has an awful time when he's forced to enter the *disgusting and depraved* world of rock music after being called in to investigate the systematic eradication of the members of a rock band. Cover: Grell. $1.50

<> **Guy Gardner 3** (G. Jones & Staton + Elliot) Gardner slaps on the super-gel to preserve the mohican as this issue he enters into a knock-down, drag-out, etc. -fest with a none too personable alien. $1.25

<> **Justice League Europe 45** (G. Jones & Randall + Elliot) *Redwinter, Part 1* (of 6). Running through to **JLE** 50, this first part of the story establishes a doom-laden scenario: the Rocket Reds run amok, attacking former Soviet military establishments; only the JLE stand in their path to total destruction of the Eastern European bloc. $1.25

<> **Justice Society of America 5** (Strazewski & Parobeck + Machlan) Revelations all round, as against the backdrop of the fight with the Ultra-Humanites, Thunder reveals the motives for his absence and Hourman some dire and dreadful secret he's been brewing... $1.25

<> **Legion of Super-Heroes 38** (Giffen & T &

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M Bierbaum, Pearson + Story) "Landmark" issue, in which both the world and the convention of comic strips come to an end, with full-page illustrations and accompanying text replacing sequential art. $1.75

<> **Robin III: Cry of the Huntress 1** (of 6; Dixon & Lyle + B. Smith) First of a new mini-series, in which Robin acquires a new and enigmatic ally in the shape of the Huntress when he befriends a young Russian immigrant. Available in two editions, one "collector's edition" with a "movement-enhanced" cover image and free mini-poster of the Mike Zeck cover which appears on the other, newstrade edition. $2.50/$1.25

<> **Star Trek: Debt of Honour** (pbk, gn; Claremont & Hughes + Story) A retrospective on Captain Kirk's career leads to a curren story, in which Kirk enters into a cove agreement with the Klingons and the Romulans to deal with an alien threat from the past. Cover: Palmer. 96pg $14.95

<> **Timber Wolf 2** (of 5; Gordon & Phillips + Dell) Thrust takes Timber Wolf under his wing to help him acclimatise to the 20th Century; but instead of fitting in, Timber Wolf attracts the unwelcome attention of Captain Flag, a tediously aggressive paramilitary patriot. Send him back to *our* 20th Century and Timber Wolf would probably do quite well... $1.25

<> **Who's Who Update '93 vol 1** Additions and changes for the loose-leaf collection of character profiles. Featured this issue: Agent Liberty, Azrael, Black Mask, Count Viper, The Netherworld, Eclipso, Evil Star and Mr Z. **Legionnaire cover by Karl Story. 48pg $4.95**

DC/PIRANHA

<> **Fast Forward 1: Phobias** (of 3; anthology) Featuring: *A Glass of Water* (Morrison & McKean); *Fear of Falling* (Helfer & Barr); *Arona* (Quinn & Ashby); *Rising Hill* (Stevens) and *Barney, the Burning Banker* (Braun). Mature readers. 64pg $4.95

EC COMICS

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<> **Shock Suspenstories 2** Featuring: *Kickback* (Kamen); *Gee, Dad... it's a Daisy!* (Wood); *The Patriots* (Davis) and *Halloween* (Ingels). Originally published in April, 1952. $1.50

<> **Tales From the Crypt 2** Featuring: *The Maestro's Hand* (Feldstein); *The Living Corpse* (Wood); *Madness at Manderville* (Kurtzman) and *Mute Witness to Murder* (Craig). Originally published in June, 1950. $1.50

<> **Weird Science 2** Featuring: *The Flying Saucer Invasion* (Feldstein); *The Meteor Monster* (Wood); *The Micro-Race* (Kamen) and *The Man Who Raced Time* (Kurtzman). Originally published in July, 1950. $1.50

ECLIPSE COMICS

<> **Blood is the Harvest 4** (FX; of 4; McElroy & Quelros + Yap) Nikita embarks on a mission to rescue her partner Milo from the Brotherhood of Abstinence, and finally, her secret - that she is a vampire herself is revealed, and it is only because of this that her plan to get Milo away from Lamia Spire HQ can possibly succeed. 32pg b&w $2.50

<> **Clive Barker's Dread** (hdbk; Adaptation: Burke & Brereton) Rescheduled. Quaid is a philosophy student who, somewhat confusedly, is obsessed with his fears, and so he experiments on his peers to study the nature of abject terror. But instead of curing himself by understanding fear, he becomes more and more fixated on the all-too-familiar vision of an axe-wielding clown. Mature readers. 64pg $24.95

<> **Dean R. Koontz's Trapped** (hdbk; adaptation: Gorman & Bilau) A young widow returns with her son - in the midst of a blizzard - to her home to find that it has been taken over by genetically mutated animals. She should have waited until the sun was shining. 72pg $22.95

<> **Parts Unknown 4** (of 4; FX; B. Smith & Gorby + Clark) The final issue of this title sees Spurr and Lucci launch a grand assault on the Harkon base in once-and-for-all battle between human and alien forces. b&w 32pg $2.50

<> **The Retaliator 4** (of 4; FX imprint; V. Jones & Simonton + Yap) Final issue of the mini-series sees Detective Levitz facing a conundrum: should he capture the vigilante Retaliator or let him go because of his apparently special qualities? b&w 32pg $2.50

ETERNITY

<> **Captain Harlock: Fall of the Empire 4** (of 4; Gibson & Eldred) Final issue of the mini-series. Disasters blossom around the Captain as events on Earth reach a critical point and, although he eventually finds the spy aboard the Arcadia, it transpires that the spy is protected by a nuclear device triggered by an alarm designed to protect him. b&w $2.50

<> **Ninja High School in Colour 5** (of 5; Dunn) Reprint. While visiting his grandfather in Japan, Jeremy meets a beautiful adversary whose dangerous covert life has implications for them all. $1.95

<> **Robotech: Invid War 6** (of 12; Spangler & Eldred) Zentraedi strikeforcers get itchy feet waiting around for the invasion forces from Earth to arrive, and decide to launch their own initiative. b&w $2.50

<> **Robotech II: The Sentinels Book II # 6** (Mason & Ulm + Waltrip) Tesla, Lisa Hunter and the Sentinels are taken - as prisoners of war - to the Kabarran city. b&w $2.50

FANTACO

<> **Shriek Special 4: Night Reaper** (Crutchley & Dilworth) A spam-like menu offering horror, horror and yet more... with demons, psychos and (not forgetting!) the Night Reaper. b&w $3.50

<> **Tales of Screaming Horror 1** (Singh) More generic horror from the British horror artist Gurchain Singh. b&w $3.50

FANTAGRAPHICS

<> **Benny Hill: The Unauthorised Biography** (Fox Legends; Eddy) Not guaranteed approval by the Hill estate - although Benny himself would probably approve - this Australian production looks back on the career of the man regarded as the one of the funniest Englishman everywhere in the world - that is, everywhere except England. b&w 24pg $2.50

<> **Billie Holiday** (Munoz & Sampayo) From the funniest man to the saddest woman in the world, a "confessional" portrait of the great jazz singer. Mature readers. b&w 56pg $7.95

<> **Cereal Killings 4** (Sturm) The dark investigative spoof continues as Carbunkle finally succeeds in finding the elderly KelCog spokesman Charlie "the Chimp" Kessler... b&w 24pg $2.25

<> **Comics Journal 154** Features an in-depth (and length!) interview with independent comics creator Dan Clowes; "There's a Way", a study of the battle for the rights to Dori Seda's work (Sternbergh); a Hunt Emerson sketchbook and the usual columns, features, etc. Magazine format. b&w 100pg $3.95

<> **Love & Rockets 13** (Hernandez Brothers) 2nd printing. Mature readers. b&w 36pg $2.50

<> **Lloyd Llewellyn Special 1** Antecedent to the **Eightball** series, featuring: *Dementia Praecox; Crawl, Worm!; Queen of Venus; Wild Night in Tigertown* and *Concrete Vixen.* Mature readers. b&w $2.75

<> **The Mishkin File 1** (Deitch) Portrait of the animator Ted Mishkin, set against the sinister backdrop of the machinations of (other) obsessively ambitious and greedy creators working in the medium. Mishkin's conscience - or lack of it was seemingly his undoing, and he ended his days unhappily in a sanitarium. Mature readers. b&w 32pg $2.95

<> **Real Stuff 10** (Eichhorn & Clowes, Dougan, J. R. Williams, Bagge, Fama and French) Continuation of Eichhorn's autobio strips with artwork from diverse artists. Mature readers. b&w 40pg $12.95

<> **Suburban Voodoo 1** (Guest) Guest puts forward the (somewhat over-used) theory that behind the bland face of American suburbia lurks genu-ine horror. Featuring: *The Devil's Consort; Ms May; Ritual Initiation.* Magazine format. Mature readers. b&w 48pg $3.95

<> **Usagi Yojimbo Book 5** (Sakai) Collected reprint of *Night of the Bats, the Bridge, the Kitemaker's Tale* and *Lone Goat & Kid.* Introduction by Stan Lee. Cover: Sakai. b&w 144pg $12.95

HARVEY

A diminished range from this fun-loving publisher this month...

<> **Casper Digest 6** $1.75

<> **Little Audrey 3** $1.25

<> **Richie Rich Adventure Digest 2** $1.75

<> **Richie Rich 12** $1.25

IMAGE COMICS

<> **Brigade 4** (of 4; Liefeld, Kanalz + Mychaels) Concluding issue, in which the survivors of the space fight return to an uncertain welcome on Earth. $1.95

<> **Cyberforce 3** (of 4; Silvestri) Velocity, T.I.M.M.I.E. and the secret datafiles disappear in the midst of Cyberdata's bid to repress the Cyberforce's activities. Guest appearance by **Youngblood**'s Bedrock. $1.95

<> **Shadowhawk 3** (of 4; Valentino) The enigma of Shadowhawk's identity grows as he searches for a way to stop the generically-named Liquid-Fire's "melting" assaults on citizens of the city's underbelly. $1.95

<> **Spawn 6** (McFarlane) The McFarlane, Liefeld and Stan Lee co-creation Overkill makes an appearance as a Mafia militiaman with the weakened Spawn in his sights. $1.95

<> **Supreme 2** (Liefeld & Murray) Introduction of Supreme's "oldest" enemy, Zacharia Grizlok, who bumps into the hero in a secured zone. Supreme reels in Skyraker, Riot, Decibel and Menagerie while steaming into Grizlok and, for his pains, is introduced to the head of GATE Industries, who makes him the proverbial "offer he can't refuse". $1.95

<> **Wetworks 1** (of 3; Portacio, Choi + Williams) *Wetwork* is an unpleasant CIA euphemism for a job where, during an killing job, an agent's hands get wet with blood. Portacio's first project with Image introduces Team 7, styled as "America's deadliest strike force". Jackson Dane's unbeaten crew of international terrorist hunters undergo a transition which makes them into "warriors of steel". Probably just as well, as the Night Tribes and the Werenation (merely the subject of legend thus far) are manifest in reality. And their particular reality is their aim of eradicating mankind... And of course it's Team 7's task to take them out. $1.95

INNOVATION

<> **Bruce Jones' Razor's Edge 1** (Jones) One-shot reprint of four horror and suspense stories. b&w $2.50

<> **Interview with the Vampire 7** (adaptation: Perozich & Moeller) Anne Rice's story continues with Louis and Claudia none the wiser after their discovery of vampires in Eastern Europe. Cover: Moeller. b&w $2.50

<> **Lost in Space 12** (of 12; Ingersoll & M. Thompson) In an issue which sets the scene for a new, ongoing series the Robinsons reach their destination, Alpha Centauri. The colonisation of the planet begins amidst revelations about Dr Smith's machinations, the truth behind the alien Aeolus 14 Umbra and the secrets held in the robot's memory chips. Cover: Palmer. $2.50

<> **Quantum Leap 10** (Quinones & Garcia) Sam finds himself transmuted into a Lenny Bruce-style 1960s stand-up comic - and landed with the task of saving a silent film star. Cover: C. Winston Taylor. b&w $2.50

<> **The Vampire Companion 4** Featuring interviews with Anne Rice, Faye Perozich, and O. J. Cariello, along with an update on Rice's **Queen of the Damned**, **The Body Thief**, and the filming of *Vampire Lestat.* Cover: Bolton. $2.50

JADEMAN COMICS

<> **The Blood Sword 52** 68pg $1.95

<> **The Blood Sword Dynasty 39** $1.25

<> **Drunken Fist 52** 68pg $1.95

<> **Force of Buddha's Palm 52** 68pg $1.95

<> **The Iron Marshall 29** $1.75

<> **Oriental Heroes 52** 68pg $1.95

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

<> **The Acid Bath Case** (Walsh & Strom) 1950s-style, quasi-satirical story of an inadequate detective on the trail of a serial killer who dissolves his victims in their own bathtubs filled with acid. Magazine format. b&w 48pg $4.95

<> **Invisible People Part 3: Mortal Combat** (Eisner) Eisner's ongoing exploration of his pet theme of the isolation that big city life brings centres this issue on a 1930s New York story, in which a relationship between a middle-aged man and woman becomes conflicted by an imbalance of personal strength. b&w $3.95

MALIBU

<> **The Arrow 1** (Mann & Moder) Spin-off series from (Malibu's) **Protectors**. Rick Palmer unwillingly takes up his bow and arrow when he is forced to confront the villainous Dr Sheldon. Palmer's only problem is that he lives in fear of repeating the accidental killing of an innocent which made him take early retirement in the first place... $1.95

<> **Necroscope 1** (of 5; adaptation: Powell & Gross) UK fantasy writer Brian Lumley's best-selling horror novel adaptation begins with the introduction of Harry Keogh, a man who can communicate with the dead (a necroscope). Keogh is the only person equipped to deal with the manifestation of the Romanian Thibor Ferenczy as a vampire. Ferenczy's somewhat unoriginal aim is world domination - and he's aided in his bid by his human assistant, Boris Dragonsani. Mature readers. $2.95

<> **The Protectors 2** (R. A. Jones & Derenick) Some members of the Protectors are beginning to have doubts about the sacrifices involved as their government-contracted mission to take out Mr Monday and the Steel Army continues without any visible resolution. Available in news trade and direct market (with free poster) editions. $1.95/$2.50

<> **The Protectors Handbook 1** Background information on the members of the super-team and their histories, inc interviews with creators Jones, Roland, Mann and Derenick. $2.50

<> **Tarzan: Love, Lies & the Lost City 3** (of 3; Kure & Snejbjerg + Kristiansen) Concluding issue sees both Jane and Tarzan desperately search for escape from Opar, each ignorant of the other's entrapment in the city. But the Hight Priestess of La is determined that neither of them should be allowed to get free, and has her own, private agenda for Tarzan's fate... $2.50

MARVEL COMICS

SHIPPING OCTOBER 6th

<> **Avengers West Coast 89** (Thomas & Ross + Dzon) Despite fighting for them, Iron Man's proposed membership of the clan is rejected. But the team is weakened by Living Lightning going AWOL and Wonder Man stressed out, so Iron Man may still be in with a chance... $1.25

<> **Cage 9** (McLaurin & Tyler) Cage finds the Hulk muscling in on his mission to corral the escaped Rhino. $1.25

<> **Captain America 410** (Gruenwald & Levins + Bulanadi) The Captain takes the Falcon back into the fold again as his regular

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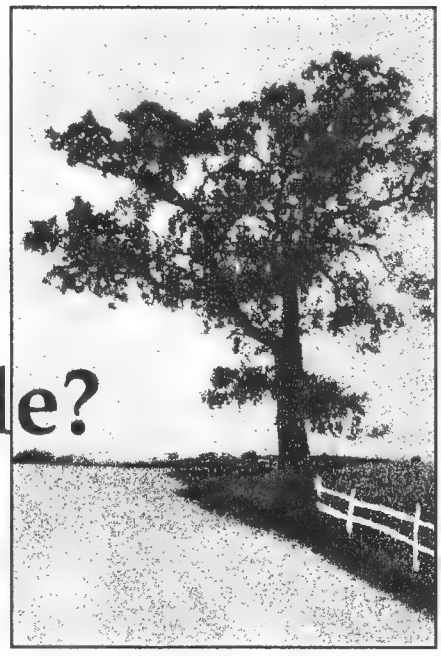

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partner, and Diamondback finally gets her revenge on Crossbones. $1.25

<> **Daredevil 311** (Herdling & McDaniel + LaRosa) **Spider-Man**'s Calypso targets DD - but for what remains dubious. $1.25

<> **Darkhawk 22** (Fingeroth & Manley) *Return to Forever, Part 2* (of 5). Featuring a guest appearance by Ghost Rider, who steams into Darkhawk as the latter stands at his father's grave-side. $1.25

<> **Dinosaurs: A Celebration 1: Terrible Claws and Tyrants** (various) In a Marvel/Epic collection of comics dedicated to the once more fashionable subject of dinosaurs, UK creators Abnett, Vince, Marks, Sharp, Hopgood, Bisley and Senior will be dispersed throughout the four titles published this month. Specific credits to be announced. **Terrible Claws and Tyrants**' cover: Walker. $4.95

<> **Dinosaurs: A Celebration 2: Egg Stealers & Earthshakers** (various) Featuring the Brontosaurus and its relatives. Cover: Bolton. $4.95

<> **Dinosaurs: A Celebration 3: Boneheads & Duckbills** (various) Cover: Leach. $4.95

<> **Dinosaurs: A Celebration 4: Horns & Heavy Armor** (various) Stegaurus, Triceratops, etc. Cover: Dolan. $4.95

<> **Excalibur 58** (Davis & Lobdell + Madureira) Featuring a guest appearance by the X-Men, who come to Excalibur's aid in chasing the Trolls - who in turn are chasing Alchemy... $1.75

<> **Marvel Masterworks 21: Fantastic Four 31-40, Annual 2** (Lee & Kirby + various) Collected reprints, featuring the Sub-Mariner, Daredevil, the Avengers, the X-Men and Spider-Man. 272pg $34.95

<> **Mutatis 1** (of 3; Lanning & Abnett + Higgins) In another post-apocalyptic scenario a mutant virus runs rampant, transmuting humans into "monstrous creatures". An infected ex-cop discovers that the only way to cure himself is to kill everyone else who has been affected by the virus... $2.25

<> **Namor 33** (Byrne & Jae Lee) Dr Doom unwillingly agrees to help Namor deal with Master Khan, in what turns out to be the ultimate battle for Namor's identity. Bubbling under: there's trouble in Atlantis. $1.25

<> **Night Thrasher 3** (of 4; Nicieza & Hoover) Featuring a guest appearance by Gideon (from **X-Force**) who fights Night Thrasher for domination of the Taylor Foundation. Cover: Bagley & Hoover. $2.00

<> **Nightstalkers 2** (Chichester & Garney + Palmer) HYDRA marshals a new force - the DOA - to capture Hannibal King, whom HYDRA needs in order to assemble a vampire super-army. $1.75

<> **Nomad** (Nicieza & Oliffe + McKenna) Nomad is assigned the role of Marvel spokesman on the L.A. riots as he visits the city to present an "objective" viewpoint of the civil unrest. Cover: Hawbaker $1.75

<> **The Original Ghost Rider 6** (Friedrich & Sutton + Mooney) During an attempt to save Roxanne Simpson's life, Ghost Rider finds himself trapped between Snake Dance and Witch-Woman. Also features a new *Phantom Rider* backing strip. Cover: Pacella. $1.75

<> **Ren & Stimpy 1** (adaptation: Slott & Kazaleh) *Happy, Happy! Joy, Joy!* Derived from Nickelodeon's *Ren & Stimpy* animated TV series, featuring the gross adventures of a bad-tempered Chihuahua and a pot-bellied fatcat. With free odour-emitting "Air Fouler". $2.25

<> **She-Hulk 46** (Byrne) She-Hulk has a companion in her solitary celestial mission when Rocket Raccoon joins her - just in time to bump into the Asparagus People... $1.75

<> **Sinking** (gn; Hudnall & Ortelezah) A study of paranoid schizophrenia, inspired by Hudnall's research when a friend was diagnosed as a schizophrenic. Mature readers. 80pg $19.95

<> **Spider-Man 2099 2** (David & Leonardi + Williamson) The Alchemax Corporation dispatches an unorthodox head-hunter to capture Spider-Man for their own particular uses - but they don't have too much time for Miguel O'Hara. $1.25

<> **Terror Inc. 6** (Chichester & Texeira + Zaffino) Former enemy Piranha Jones returns to make Power Man's life hell. As a result, the Punisher goes head-to-head with Terror in a competition to decide who will have the honour of getting first bite at the old villain. $1.75

<> **Toxic Crusaders 8** (Furman & Yaniger + Severin) Featuring two stories focusing on individual team-members: With Tromaville faced with imminent invasion, Headbanger and Pyscho come to blows; Nozone gets the bug most feared by the Crusaders. $1.25

<> **Uncanny X-Men 295** (Lobdell & Peterson) *X-Cutioner's Song, Part 5* (of 12). Storm and her Gold Team come off the worst in a battle with Apocalypse. Includes one of 12 free trading cards. $1.50

<> **Web of Spider-Man 95** (Mackie & Savuik) *Spirits of Venom, Part 1* (of 4). First of a four-part cross-over with **Spirits of Vengeance**. Spider-Man, John Blaze and Ghost Rider team up in opposition to Venom when the reformed villain attempts to teach Hag and Troll a severe lesson. Featuring a guest appearance by Spider-Man's doppelganger, Demogoblin. Continued in **Spirits of Vengeance** 5. $1.25

<> **World Championship Wrestling 9** (Lackey & Wilson + Hudson) More muscle-bound male bonding in the ring. $1.25

SHIPPING OCTOBER 13th

<> **67 Seconds** (gn; Robinson & Yeowell) Romantic thriller, in which a man has one minute six seconds to save his lover's life; their past life is told through a series of flashbacks. $15.95

<> **Alpha Flight 115** (Furman & Broderick + Patterson) Features the debut of new villain, Wyre, and a guest appearance by **X-Force**'s Weapon X who unites with Alpha Flight to save the threatened Omega's life. $1.75

<> **Amazing Spider-Man 370** (Michelinie & Bagley + Emberlin) *Invasion of the Spider Slayers, Part 3.* Spider-Man and the Black Cat team up to dispatch the Scorpion. $1.25

<> **Barbie 24** (Trusiani & ?) Barbie suddenly acquires green consciousness when she and her pals transform a parking lot into a haven for wildlife... $1.25

<> **Darkhold 3** (Cooper & Harris) The Redeemers are sent on a mission impossible to accomplish whilst staying sane. Features a cameo by the Scarlet Witch. $1.75

<> **Death's Head II #1** (Marvel UK; Abnett & Sharp, Lanning + Smith) This new, ongoing series continues the story-line from **Warheads** 7, and finds Death's Head II and attractive sidekick Tuck caught in the midst of a battle between super-villains and guests, the ubiquitous X-Men. $1.75

<> **Ghost Rider 32** (Mackie & Blevins) Guest appearance from Dr Strange, who accomplishes a sleigh-of-hand which restores Dan Keitch (Ghost Rider's human host) to the land of the living. $1.75

<> **Groo the Wanderer 96** (Aragones & Evanier) *The Tasks of Groo, Part 1* (of 4). Groo's god, Megatheos, decides that he wants to make an homage to Hercules' Twelve Labours and commissions hero Arcadio to perform replicate tasks. But when Groo gets roped in, the results are predictably awful to behold... $2.25

<> **Guardians of the Galaxy 31** (Gallagher & West + Montano) A dream comes true for Major Victory when he's given the chance to work with Captain America. Meanwhile, it's business as usual for the other Guardians, who are planning to attack the Badoon home world, ignorant of the fact the Badoon know exactly what - and who - is coming. $1.25

<> **Hellraiser: Book of the Damned 3** (various) Featuring work by Chichester,

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Mignola and McMahon, this book focuses on the diary of Philip LeMarchand, inventor of the Lament Configuration. Adult, V. $4.95

<> **Marvel Comics Presents 117** Featuring: *Wolverine/ Venom, Part 1* (of 6; Mackie & Kieth); *Giant Man, Part 5*; *Lockheed & Devil Dinosaur* (Dietz & Lim); *Ghost Rider & Iron Fist*. Cover: Kieth. $1.50

<> **Marvel Milestones: Amazing Spider-Man 1** (Lee & Ditko) Part of the continuing 30th anniversary celebration: complete reprint of **Amazing Spider-Man** 1. $2.95

<> **Metropol A.D. 3** (of 3; McKeever) Final part of the mini sees the seven-month-old Joshua taking matters into his own hands when it appears the Angels are overpowered and that the possibility of humanity's salvation is remote. Adult, V. $3.50

<> **Onyx Overlord 3** (of 4; Moebius & Lofficier + Bingham) Finnegar and Dabxtrey make good their escape - but to the slave encampments on Onyx. The major comes to their rescue, but he's vulnerable as the Onyx Overlord brings his attention to bear on the Airtight Garage. $2.75

<> **Pendragon II 6** (Marvel UK; Abnett & Royle + Buylla) Featuring a guest appearance of Spider-Man as arachnoid consultant when the new-suited Pendragons steam off to planet Arachne to deal with an "evil spider creature" situation. Cover: Davis & Neary. $1.75

<> **Punisher & Captain America: Blood and Glory 3** (of 3; "bookshelf format"; Chichester & Clark + Janson) Final issue of the series has the Punisher and Captain America uniting to sort out their problems. 48pg $5.95

<> **Punisher War Zone 10** (Dixon & Romita Jr + Manley) Microchip faces off the Magnificent Seven in order to avert the threat to his -and Doreen's life. $1.75

<> **Quasar 41** (Gruenwald & Smith) Disgraced and stripped of his powers, Quasar is forced to give way while his predecessor, the first Marvel Boy assumes his role as Protector of the Universe. $1.25

<> **Ravage 2099 #1** (Stan Lee & Ryan + Williams) Stan Lee's new comic focuses on the activities of Paul-Phillip Ravage, ex-commander of ECO, a futuristic environmental team with a licence to kill... But Ravage is framed for a crime of which he's innocent when he uncovers corruption in ECO's administration. Infuriated by the injustice of it all, Ravage quits the organisation and goes it alone as an eco-terrorist and bounty-hunter with a hidden agenda of undermining the corrupt establishment. $1.75

<> **Savage Sword of Conan 204** (Thomas & Buscema + Chan) *Conan in the City of Magicians, Part 3*. Conan comes to Imhotep's aid when he comes face-to-face with his own, rebellious demon troops. b&w $2.25

<> **Silver Sable 7** (Wright & Butler + Sanders III) The Wild Pack, Silver Sable and Deathlok join forces to find the Statue of Liberty - but end up captured by the thief and added to her collection (of American icons?) $1.25

<> **Sleepwalker 19** (Budiansky & Haynes) Sleepwalker's in for a heavy gig this issue, with the beginning of a story-line featuring the re-appearance of nemesis Cobweb and with 8-Ball and the Chain Gang running interference. With free Halloween pop-up mask. $2.00

<> **Thor 55** (DeFalco & Frenz + Milgrom) With Dr Strange making a guest appearance, the real Thor's hiding place is finally uncovered. But Eric Masterton is dubious about the sacrifice required to release Thor. $1.25

<> **Wolverine 64** (Hama & Pacella) In addition to his grief over losing Mariko, Wolverine now loses Silver Fox. A berserker rage can't be too far off... $1.75

<> **Wonder Man 16** (Jones & Johnson + Panosian) Wonder Man throws a wobbler - and it's not the West Coast Avengers who quickly come to his aid - but instead crime boss Lotus's unleashing of LA's "Armed Response" unit. $1.25

<> **X-Men: X-Tinction Agenda** (tpbk; Claremont & L. Simonson, Lee, Liefeld. Bogdanove) Reprints **Uncanny X-Men** 270-272, **X-Factor** 60-62 and **New Mutants** 95-97. 224pg $19.95

SHIPPING OCTOBER 20th

<> **Avengers 357** (Harras & Epting + Palmer) All-action issue, in which the Swordsman escapes from the Avengers' HQ, Hera's vengeance-driven campaign against Herakles grinds on, Arkon returns and more is revealed about the enigmatic Gatherers. $1.25

<> **Conan 263** (Thomas & Docherty + Villagran) Conan and Hobb (one of whom - and you can guess which - will not come out of this alive) confront the demon Malaq in the Border Kingdom. $1.25

<> **Excalibur 59** (Lobdell & Kolins) Historical meeting for Nightcrawler and Mystique, as they come face-to-face for the first time in 12 years (**Uncanny X-Men** 142). $1.75

<> **Fish Police 3** (Moncuse) Reprint - in colour - of a series previously published by the Epic imprint. $2.25

<> **Ghost Rider: Fear** (Mackie & Weeks + Williamson) Scarecrow comes out of Creedmore mental institution after an operation which has miraculously increased his powers. Ghost Rider teams up with Captain America in an improbable alliance to deal with their common enemy - but the Captain is forced to retire, leaving the field open for Ghost Rider to show his true colours. Gatefold cover: Weeks. 48pg $5.95

<> **G.I. Joe 131** (Hama & Wildman + Baskerville) Things are getting hectic on Cobra Island, with the Cobra Commander's assault on the Joe's HQ gathering steam and Firefly's crew of zombie ninjas running riot over the rest of the territory. $1.25

<> **Hell's Angel 6** (Marvel UK; Jaye & Senior) Featuring a guest appearance by the X-Men, joining Hell's Angel in a confrontation with the Matrix assassin. Meanwhile, Mephisto's machinations on the MySTECH board precipitates the universe into chaos. Cover: Brian Hitch. $1.75

<> **Incredible Hulk 400** (David & Duursema, Bacnalo + Farmer) Giant anniversary issue (again). *Ghost of the Past, Part 4* (of 4). Frenetic action as the Hulk fights the Leader, battling for control of the Pantheon. Plus a reprint of the Leader's first appearance (from **Tales to Astonish** 63). 64pg $2.50

<> **Marvel Age 119** With an Iron Man cover celebrating his 30th anniversary; the restoration of the *Iron Man Masterworks*; a preview of **The Hulk: Future Imperfect, The Civil War** and *Marvel 2099*. Cover: Romita Jr. and Windsor-Smith. $1.00

<> **Marvel Tales 268** (DeFalco & Leonardi + Rubenstein) Reprints **Amazing Spider-Man** 254. $1.25

<> **Morbius 4** (Kaminski & Garney + Witherby) Features a cameo appearance by Spider-Man and the introduction of new baddie, Dr Paine (a combination of Freddy Krueger and Dr Mengele). $1.75

<> **Nightbreed 22** (Vince & Doran + Pascoe) *Mad God Baphomet* story-line concludes with the Nightbreed's destiny hanging in the balance as Cabal and Baphomet sweat it out with Ozymandias. Adult, N, V. $2.50

<> **Punisher 73** (Abnett & Lanning, Braithwaite + Williamson) *The Warehouse, Part 1* (of 3). In this story-line leading up to the 75th issue of the title, the Punisher takes it upon himself to attack "The Warehouse", a NYC crack fortress - and is trapped between the government's anti-vigilante assault team and the drug baron's hitman, Recoil. $1.25

<> **SHIELD 42** (Sharpe & Brown + Hudson) First of a four-part story-line introducing yet another new strike force - this time Strike Force Shield. And SFS does pretty much the same sort of thing all the others do: fights

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international terrorism. Let's hope that they make a better job of it than real secret services do when they're led into their first mission in New York by Nick Fury. $1.75

<> **Slapstick 2** (of 4; Kaminski & Fry + Austin) Stormy times ahead for Earth's super-normals as Overkill touches down on a fascistic mutant-cleansing exercise. $1.25

<> **Spider-Man 29** (Nocenti & Marrinan + DeLaRosa) *Return to the Mad Dog Ward, Part 1* (of 2). Spider-Man confronts Dr Hope's monsters. Meanwhile Peter and Mary Jane's relationship gets rocky when he makes an unpleasant discovery. $1.75

<> **Warlock and the Infinity Watch 11** (Starlin & Kirkwood Studios + Almond) Gamora, Moondragon, Drax and Pip's origins are revealed - at, as it turns out - an incredibly inconvenient moment... $1.75

<> **What If? 44** (Busiek & McDonnell) *What if the Punisher had been possessed by Venom?* $1.25

<> **X-Factor 85** (David & Jae Lee + Milgrom) *X-Cutioner's Song, Part 5* (of 12). Vengeance-driven Styfe will do anything - and that includes betraying his former followers - to get one up on the X-Men. With trading card $1.50

<> **X-Men 15** (Nicieza & Kubert) *X-Cutioner's Song, Part 6* (of 12). As Apocalypse nears his prey Styfe, X-people unite to deconstruct the Mutant Liberation Front. Free trading card included. $1.50

<> **X-Men: The Animated Series 2** (Macchio & Wildman + Campanella) During their bid to free Jubilee, a member of the X-team dies. Meanwhile the Beast's trial goes on. $1.25

SHIPPING OCTOBER 27th

<> **A1 #1** (of 4; Epic; various) US revival of the expensive & erratic UK anthology title, featuring an **On the Road** homage by Igor Goldkind, in which an Englishman travelling in the southern states is picked up by William Burroughs and Jack Kerouac; an adaptation of Cyrano de Bergerac's **Voyage to the Moon** (P. Craig Russell); *Goofin'* (Scott Hampton); *Fanciful Headcase* (Ed Hillyer) and *Frankenstein Meets Shirley Temple* (Roger Langridge). Adult, V. $5.95

<> **Amazing Spider-Man 371** (Michelinie & Bagley + Emberlin) *Invasion of the Spider Slayers, Part 4.* Spider-Man comes to terms with a new Spider Slayer. $1.25

<> **Barbie Fashion 22** (Slate & Conner) Important stuff here for those with an eye to fashion - Barbie throws a surprise Halloween party - and everyone gets to show off their new outfits. Skipper, meanwhile, gets a timely lesson on raking leaves... $1.25

<> **Death's Head II-Killpower: Battletide 1** (of 4; Marvel UK; Abnett & Lanning, Senior + Griffiths) In a fight issue of baroque proportions, Wolverine, Captain America, the Hulk, Psylocke, Hercules, Sabretooth et al steam off to Coliseum (a war-filled world) to spectate - and perhaps indulge in a little light fighting - as Death's Head and Killpower enter the arena. $1.75

<> **Deathlok 18** (Wright & McDaniel + Palmiotti) *Cyberwar, Part 2* (of 5). Deathlok gets support all round as Symkaria's Silver Sensation, Silver Sable and her Wild Pack come to his aid as he pursues his human body and fights off Ryker's army. Meanwhile, there are startling revelations about the first Deathlok, John Kelly. $1.75

<> **Digitek 1** (of 4; Marvel UK; Tomlinson & Lanning + Power) Rescheduled. MySTECH select scientist Jonathan Bryant to test Proteus, a new organic computer matrix. But as Bryant makes a presentation, rival corporation Northstar makes a hit on the Proteus labs, killing Bryant. Proteus revives and restructures his body thus creating Digitek. In the same process however, living manifestations of a Northstar computer virus have been created - Purge, Byte and Kay: it's Bryant's job now to protect MySTECH from Northstar and rub out the three mutants. In the meantime, he must also come to terms with his remaining humanity and deal with the emotional ties that go with it. $1.95

<> **Dr Strange 48** (Kaminski & Isherwood) A vengeful attack by the Vishanti leads to Dr Strange losing half his powers when he refuses to participate in a mystical war. $1.75

<> **Fantastic Four 371** (DeFalco & Ryan + Bulanadi) Johnny's wife, the Skrull Lyja makes a re-appearance, and the Torch makes a seriously bad judgement call which has long-term implications for the Fantastic Four.$2.00

<> **Ghost Rider-Blaze: Spirits of Vengeance 5** (Mackie & Kubert + Reinhold) *Spirits of Venom, Part 2* (of 4). Hag and Troll, returning Deathwatch's burnt body, release overwhelming forces against Ghost Rider and John Blaze; but they form an unnatural alliance with Venom to rebut Hag and Troll's attack. Continues in **Web of Spider-Man** 96, concluding in **Spirits of Vengeance** 6. $1.75

<> **Iron Man 287** (Kaminiski & Hopgood + Wiacek) Rhodey wears the dead Tony Stark's armour to do battle with the Atom Smasher who's intention it is to destroy Stark International's nuclear plants. $1.25

<> **James Bond Jr. 12** (Abnett & Capaldi + Georgiou) Jamsh'sh nephew takes on a whole gamut of baddies - Goldfinger, Jaws, Scumlord and Dr DeRange in an action-fest issue. The question is, could 007 have done the same, or would he have been waylaid by the artfully deployed bodies in his path?$1.25

<> **Marvel Comics Presents 118** Featuring: *Wolverine-Venom* (Mackie & Kieth); *Giant Man* (conclusion); *Solo* (Fein & Bagley) and *Legion of Vengeance.* Cover: Kieth. $1.50

<> **Marvel Universe Master Edition 25** (Ward & Sanderson, Pollard + Rubenstein) Profiles of 24 Marvel characters inc: **X-Force**'s Deadpool, **New Warrior**'s Night Thrasher, **X-Factor**'s Strong Guy and Black Widow. 48pg $4.50

<> **Moon Knight 45** (Kavanagh & Fry + Ivy) The Demogoblin precipitates Marc Spector into the "Moon Knight's Inferno", from where Spector strives desperately to escape - before he is attacked by Spider-Man's nemesis's controlling virus. $1.75

<> **Motormouth 75** (Marvel UK; Marks & Frank + Smith) While Motormouth sorts out the Dove Soldiers and reclaims her MOPED, back on Earth Nick Fury and Cable enter into a marriage of convenience to further their investigations into the MySTECH. Features the introduction of new character Bysshe, "a supercharged female warrior". What will the lads make of that? $1.75

<> **The 'Nam 75** (various & Trimpe, Harris + Palmiotti) Marvel celebrate this title's 75th issue with a multi-viewed account of the My Lai massacre... 48pg $2.25

<> **New Warriors 30** (Nicieza & Robertson + Mahlstedt) The New Warriors find themselves powerless bystanders of a brutal battle. Cover: Mahlstedt & Bagley. $1.25

<> **Punisher War Journal 49** (Dixon & Fox + Fredericks) A cop with a conscience pays the price of doing his duty by losing his family, and vows that he'll get even with the perpetrator, the Punisher - or die. Cover: Romita Jr.$1.75

<> **Silver Surfer 75** (Marz & Lim + Christopher) *The Herald Ordeal: Conclusion.* Double-sized issue sees all Galactus's former heralds uniting to defeat Morg in a battle which results in a hero's death. $2.50

<> **Spectacular Spider-Man 195** (DeMatteis & S. Buscema) *Death of Vermin, Part 2* (of 3). Vermin's last hope for a cure has disappeared with the kidnapped Dr Kafka. Spider-Man steps in to save the day - but finds that he's got to slug it out with the Mutates' and Vermin's creator Baron Zemo, first. Available in "Dirt Bag" and standard editions, the former containing a free issue of *Dirt Bag 2* and a free audio cassette, *Down to Earth* (featuring tracks by Say Cries Mary, The Beastie Boys, Levitation, Tom Cochrane, Wildside, Mellow Man Ace, The Smithereens, Silk Toxik and Little Shawn.) $2.50/$1.25

<> **Thor 456** (DeFalco & Frenz + Milgrom) Blood Axe pops up, determined to put Masteron off his stroke in getting hold of the real Thor, and with Earth Force and Code: Blue running interference on the proceedings, Thor could be incarcerated for a while. $1.25

<> **Warheads 7** (Marvel UK; Vince & Coleby) Featuring a guest appearance by the Silver Surfer. The Warheads recognise a potential fait accompli when they see one, and call up Death's Head II to help them out. Continues in the ongoing **Death's Head II** series. $1.75

<> **What The?! 24** (various) Halloween special of Marvel's self-parody title with *Salem's Plot, Aunt May's House o' Horror* and Spider-Man in *The Green Gobbler Returns.* $1.25

<> **William Shatner's Tekworld 4** (Goulart & Sullivan) Jake Cardigan's ex-lover, Warbride makes a re-appearance, but Jake's doubtful about her motives and uncertain as to whether she will help him try to reclaim the anti-Teknology. $1.75

<> **X-Force 17** (Nicieza & Capullo + Candelario) *X-Cutioner's Song, Part 8* (of 12). The critical conflict: Apocalypse and Stryfe battle it out while the X-teams stand on the sidelines, mulling over their options... With one of 12 free trading cards. $1.50

<> **X-Men Classic 78** (Claremont & Smith + Wiacek) Reprints **Uncanny X-Men** 174. Cover: Hughes. $1.25

METAL MAMMOTH

<> **Heavy Metal January 1993** (anthology) Global strip magazine, with fantasy and SF strips from Torres, Crepax, Geary, Kordey and Djargo. Magazine. Adult. $3.95

MILLENIUM

<> **The Best of Sorcery 1** (of 3; anthology) Featuring reprinted work by Chaykin, Morrow, Williamson, Toth, etc. (originally appearing in the 1970s Archie/Red Circle **Sorcery** and **Madhouse** titles). Cover: Bolton. b&w, 48 pages $3.50

<> **Doc Savage: Repel 1** (Collins & Choles + Lewis) Cadwiller Olden, a dwarf who seeks world domination uses his army of giants to gain control over Repel, a demonic elemental. Doc's task is to avert global disaster by defeating the vertically-challenged Olden... Cover: Dorman. $2.50

<> **It! The Terror From Beyond Space 2** (of 4; Zachary & Ellis, Amash + Rollie) Now-familiar story, adapted from the classic '50s film, in which an Earth-bound crew find that their ship has a deadly stowaway... $2.50

<> **The Justice Machine: The Chimera Conspiracy 2** (of 3; Banks & Ellis + Lewis) The Justice Machine alone can see the tyranny that lies behind Darkforce and Zarren's bid to transform the Earth into the Georwell dream. Backup strip Adam Hughes' *The Justice Machine: Year Two.* $2.50

MIRAGE STUDIOS

<> **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 52** (Eastman & Laird, Lawson + Aiken) *City at War, Part 3* (of 13). The Turtles confront a new villain from the Shredder Elite. Meanwhile, Casey's indulging himself with another woman while April's with her sister in LA. b&w $2.25

<> **TMNT: Haunted Pizza** (Howarth) Roots-spoof story of the alien fungus OOH-ZAH's inter-galactic exile to planet Earth, where he eventually ends up in a cheese vat from which the Turtles's toppings are scooped.b&w$2.25

NOW COMICS

<> **Fright Night 3-D Halloween Special 1** (Llewellyn & Vokes + Mowry) The granddaddy of all vampires is targeted by sympathetic vampire-slayers, Charlie Brewster and Peter Vincent. Includes free 3-D glasses. $2.95

<> **The Green Hornet Annual 1** (Van Hise & DeCaire + Mowry) Kato and Britt provide red herrings for the police so that the Green Hornet can pursue a serial killer uninterrupted. $2.50

<> **The Green Hornet: Solitary Sentinel 1** (of 3; Van Hise & Velluto + DeZuniga) First of a three-issue mini-series which tells the story of Paul's transition from faltering Hornet aspirant to seasoned vigilante. $2.50

<> **The Green Hornet 16** (Fortier & T. Smith + Mowry) Continued from **Green Hornet** 8. Commissioner Hamilton desperately searches for the Hornet's hat - having thrown it away before realising that it was the only evidence he had to prove the hero's identity. $1.95

<> **Kato of the Green Hornet II 2** (of 4; Baron & Mayerick + Sherman) More about Kato's toughest (?) assignment - as the minder of the rock star Sragow continues. $2.50

<> **Ralph Snart Adventures** (tpbk; Hansen) Collecting **Ralph Snart Adventures vol 2** issues 5-7. $7.95

<> **Real Ghostbusters 3-D Halloween Special** (Petersen & Graham, Brozman + various) Two previously unpublished Ghostbuster stories, one of which is in 3-D. Includes free 3-D glasses. $2.95

<> **The Twilight Zone 14** (Hanzel & Tuma) *Historical Perspective.* A history teacher builds a time machine as an aid to explaining past events to his pupils - but he doesn't bank on it stopping in... $1.95

REVOLUTIONARY

<> **Contemporary Bio-Graphics 7: Spike Lee** (Willis & Escalmel) Portrait of the uniquely talented young black film-maker. b&w $2.50

<> **The Elvis Presley Experience 3** (Shapiro & McCray + Sowd) The King in Hollywood: the making of *Love Me Tender, Jailhouse Rock* and *King Creole.* b&w $2.75

<> **Hard Rock Comics 9: Queen** (Steffenhagen & Rudolfo) Profile of the progress of one of commercial rock's most influential bands. b&w $2.50

<> **The Led Zeppelin Experience 3** (Steffenhagen & Paradise) The Seventies. b&w$2.50

<> **Rock n' Roll Comics 54: U2** (of 2; Sanford & Pallot) Looking at the Irish band's early years in war-torn Belfast. b&w $2.50

<> **Sports Legends 4: Muhammad Ali** (de Boubon & Blackwell) Profile of the great boxing star's rise to the top of his game from humble beginnings in Kentucky. b&w $2.50

<> **Sports Superstars 9: Barry Sanders** (Seymour & Pentzer) Study of the record-breaking athlete's career. With three free collector's cards. $2.75

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■ **Excaliber Comics**, 19 The Hornet, Unit 1, The Alms House Arcade, Chichester, West Sussex. Mon-Wed 10-5; closed Thurs; Fri 10-5; Sat 9-6 (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, gn, Brit, m/o, STO, RPG, videos) 0243 537070

■ **Fantastic Store**, 14 Gardner Street, Brighton BN1 1PL. Mon-Wed 9 - 6; Thurs 9 - 8; Fri-Sat 9 - 6. (imp, back, ind, u/g, s-p, gn, Brit, STO) 0273-25300

■ **Incognito Comic Shop**, 14 Starnes Court, Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. Mon - Fri 10 - 6; Sat 9 - 6. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, m/o, STO, film & tv related merch 0622 683 642

■ **Paperback Reader**, 82 Queens Road, Hastings, TN34 1RL. Mon - Sat (excl Wed, closed) 9.00 - 5.30. (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, m/o, STO, assorted 2nd hand ppbks) 0424 446749

■ **Siegi's Comics & Bags**, Unit 3, 6 Orange St, Canterbury, Kent. Mon - Sat 9 - 6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, gn, STO, tv SF, gum cards, classic sf memorabilia, m/o) 0227 470840

■ **Whatever Comics**, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, m/o, STO, model kits) 0227 453226

MIDLANDS

■ **Another World**, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, m/o, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0533 515266

■ **Another World**, 11 Market Street, Nottingham. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, m/o, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0602 484 122

■ **Arrival Comics**, 2 Broad Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HP. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.15. imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, m/o, horror videos, adult (non-porn) mags. 0902-313 660

■ **Bookworm**, Unit 3 33-39 Tower Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk. Mon - Sat 11.00 - 4.00. (back, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, fantasy & sf, early Penguins, general fic & non-fic, records) 0553 760904/771880

■ **Central City Comics**, 4 Eagle St, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon - Sat 10 - 6. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, gn, STO, m/o: wants lists with sae) 0473 233017

■ **Comic Showcase**, 17 Norfolk Street, Cambridge. Mon - Fri 11.00 -6.00; Sat 9.30 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, gn, m/o, STO) 0223-69206

■ **Comics Unlimited**, 4 Clair Court, Lime Street, Bedford. Mon 9.00 - 8.00pm; Tues - Sat 9.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, Brit, STO, RPG)

■ **Demon Comics**, 12 Berrington Street, Hereford HR4 0BJ. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 6.00. (imp, back, merch, Brit, gn, m/o, STO, RPG, t-shirts, sci-fi models) 0432 358355

■ **Fantastic Store**, 6 Suffolk Street, Queensway, Birmingham B1 1LT. Mon - Fri 9.30 - 6; Sat 9 - 6. (imp, back, ind, u/g, s-p, gn, Brit, STO) 021-643 3667

■ **Fantastic Store**, Virgin Megastore, 6-8 Wheelergate, Nottingham. Mon - Sat 9 - 6. (imp, back, ind, u/g, s-p, gn, Brit, STO) 0602-476246

■ **Fantasy World**, 10 Market Square Arcade, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1NU. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, m/o, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0782 279294 (fax 0782 202381)

■ **The Final Frontier**, 29 St Nicholas Place, Leicester LE1 4LD. Mon - Fri 9.30 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.00. (imp, back, Brit, gn, m/o, STO) Established 1984. 0533 514347

■ **Ground Zero**, 11 Hanley Arcade, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1NQ. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.00. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, m/o, STO, accessories) 0623 22017

■ **Magic Labyrinth**, 34-36 Rutland Street, Leicester LE1 1RD. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 6.00 (imp, back, ind, gn, u/g, frgn, merch, s-p, m/o, STO, RPG) 0533 518178/fax: 0533 518179

■ **Mephisto Comics**, 81 Ber Street, Norwich, NR1 3RD. Mon - Fri 10 - 6, Sat 9 - 6. (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, s-p, u/g, Brit, m/o, STO) 0603 762762

■ **Nostalgia & Comics**, 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon - Thurs 9.15 - 5.45, Fri + Sat 9.15 - 6. (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, s-p, u/g, Brit, m/o, STO) 021 643 0143

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■ **Stateside Comics PLC at Virgin**, Virgin Megastore, 1st Floor, 98 Corporation Street, Birmingham B4 6SX. Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat: 9-6; Tues 9.30-6; Thurs: 9-8. (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, tv-film & fantasy, gn, merch, STO) 021 236 5735 (fax: 021 236 8153)

■ **Time Zone**, 12 Fish Street (off Butcher Row), Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1UR. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, m/o, STO, RPG) 0743 365192

■ **Zoom Comics!!** Unit 3, Inshops Centre, 65 South Parade, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72 1QX. Mon-Sat 9.00-5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, m/o, STO) 021 354 7500

NORTH WEST

■ **Arcadia Comics**, 12 Clarence Arcade, Stamford Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 7PT (next to Comet). Mon-Sat 10.00-5.15 (imp, back, ind, horror & sf mags and novels, Doctor Who, Trek, ltd merch, ltd gn, Brit, STO, ltd toys & figures, m/o: send wants list) 061 339 1816

■ **4th Dimension**, 31 Back Piccadilly, Piccadilly, Manchester. Wed - Sat 12.00 - 5.30 (back, sf & horror novels, Doctor Who, Star Trek, mags & more). 061 237 5996

■ **Imagination Station**, Unit 28, Portland Shopping Centre, Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1NT. Mon - Sat 9 - 5.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO)

■ **Odyssey 7**, 21 Hanging Ditch, Corn Exchange Buildings, Manchester M4 3ES. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5.30pm. (imp, back, sf-fantasy-horror books, postcards, videos, badges, soundtracks, stills, LF filmbooks, Star Trek, Doctor Who.) 061 832 7044

■ **Odyssey 7**, Precinct Centre, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9RN. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5.30pm (imp, back, sf-fantasy-horror novels, postcards, posters, badges, stills, LF film books, Trek, Dr Who, etc) 061 273 6666

■ **Ogre Books**, 120 Picton Road, Wavertree, Liverpool 15. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.00 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, s-p, Brit) 051 733 0149

■ **Thunderbooks**, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool. 10 - 5.30 Tues, Thurs, Fri, 'Sat all year; Mon & Sun in season (closed Wed). Out of season open Wed, closed Sun + Mon. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, limited u/g, Brit, frgn, kits, limited gn, m/o, t-shirts, media collectors' items) 0253-48321

■ **Thunderbooks II**, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancs. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, limited u/g, Brit, frgn, limited gn, m/o, kits, t-shirts, media collectors' items. 0772-204287

■ **The Time Tunnel**, 66 Edleston Road, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 7HD. Mon - Sat 10.00am - 5.30pm excl Weds. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, model kits, toys, action figures, Doctor Who, Star Trek)

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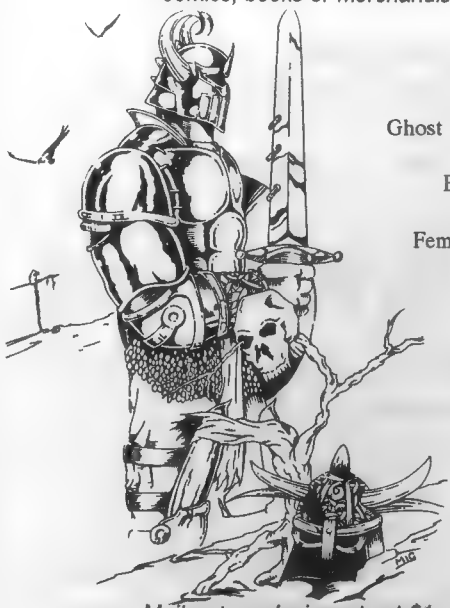

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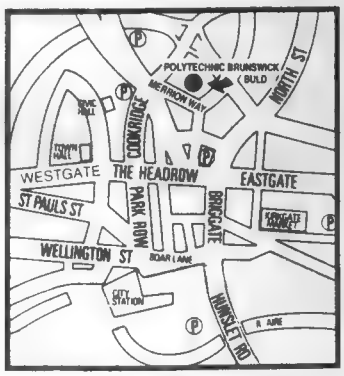

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■ **Armadillo**, 16-22 Anlaby Road, Hull, North Humberside HU1 2PA. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00; late Thurs & Fri to 8.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, u/g, STO, videos, ppbks, heavy metal t-shirts. 0482 29787

■ **Books N' Comics**, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesborough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch ind, u/g, gn, m/o, STO, film mags, Doctor Who, Star Trek, bags, boxes, accessories) 0642 249 143

■ **Books N' Comics**, Unit 8, Regency West Mall, Princes Regent Street, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, gn, m/o, STO, fantasy gn, film mags, Doctor Who, Star Trek, boxes bags & accessories) 0642 617 241

■ **Dells Comic & Book Stalls**, 129 Kirkgate Market, Bradford 1. Mon - Sat 9 - 5 excl Wed 9 - 3 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, horror masks, tv fantasy mags) 0274 390 541

■ **Happy Planet**, Rocks Off, 85 Westgate, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD1 2RD. Mon - Fri 10.00 - 5.30, Sat 9.30 - 6.00 (imp, back, merch, ind, s-p, Brit, STO) 0274 736 292

■ **Nostalgia & Comics**, 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield, Yorkshire. Mon - Fri 10.00 - 6.00; Sat 9.15 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, m/o, original art, model kits, sf & fantasy gns, horror magazines, newspaper strip compilations) 0742 769475

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■ **Sheffield Space Centre**, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield, Yorks. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.00 excl Wed. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, m/o, STO, Star Trek items) 0742 758905

■ **Skyrack Book Service**, 51 The Superstore, Merrion Centre, Leeds LS2 8LY. Yorkshire. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5pm; excl Weds: 9.30am - 1pm. (imp, back, ind, Brit, STO, SF hbk gn & magazines - many pulps, m/o) Establ 1965.

WEST COUNTRY

■ **Comics & CDs**, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 7.00. (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, RPG, u/g, Brit, original art) 0272 244655

■ **Floppy Tongue Comics**, 96 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7QY. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 6.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, m/o, STO) 0722 331107

■ **The Hobbit Hole**, 9 Commercial Road, Gloucester. Mon 12-5.30; Tues-Sat 10-5.30. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, gn, STO, T-shirts, film-tv mags + merch) 0452 309 533

■ **Joy's Comics**, 25 High East Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1EZ. Mon - Sun 7.30 - 6. (imp back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, m/o) 0305 269737 (after 6pm 833304)

■ **Kathies Comics**, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon - Fri 9.30 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, m/o, STO) 0752 257800

■ **Wonderworld**, 803 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 6AP. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, m/o, STO, FRPG & miniatures, Games Workshop specialist stockist) 0202 422 964

■ **Wonderworld**, Unit 2, Bevois St, Southampton S01 1JD. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, FRPG & miniatures) 0703 234815

ISLE OF WIGHT

■ **Astounding Comics**, 74 High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight P030 1BG. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, m/o, STO, RPG, videos) 0983 825544

WALES

■ **Cardiff Fantasy Centre**, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sats only 9.30 - 5.00. (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, gn, computerised STO, videos; establ 12 yrs) 0222 563005

■ **Comix Shoppe**, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, m/o, STO, u/g, film/tv mags) 0792 642097

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 excl Thurs 10.00 - 6.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, gn, STO) 0222 228885

■ **Journey into Mystery**, The Emporium, 34 Castle Arcade, Cardiff. Thurs - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, gn, STO)

■ **Negative Zone**, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.00. (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, STO) 0633 222159

SCOTLAND

■ **AKA Books & Comics**, 25 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5RJ Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.00pm; Sun 12.00 - 5.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, gn) 041 552 6692

■ **Black Hole Comic Shop**, The Market Hall, Wellgate Centre, Dundee. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, ind, u/g, STO) 0382 21037

■ **City Centre Comics**, Argyle Shopping Centre, 28 Argyle Street, Glasgow G2 8AD. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.00. (back issue specialists) 041-632 2786 (after 6pm)

■ **Dead Head Comics**, 44 Victoria Street, Edinburgh, EH1 2JW. Mon - Wed, Fri, Sat: 10 - 6.30; Thurs 11 - 7.30; Sunday 12 - 4. (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 031 226 2774

■ **Earth 2 Comics** Candleriggs Market, 71-73 Albion St, Glasgow G1 1RB. Fri-Sat 9 - 5.30 Sun 10 - 5.30. (back issue specialists, gn, SF bks, ind, m/o) 041-647 6810 (after 6pm)

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 2 - 3 Teviot Place, Edinburgh, EH1 2QZ. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30, excl Thurs till 6.30. (imp, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, gn, m/o, STO) 031-225 8613

■ **Forbidden Planet** (back issues), 17 West Cross Causeway, Edinburgh. Thurs - Sat 10.00 - 5.30, excl Thurs till 6.30. (back issue specialists) 031-667 0426

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon - Wed 10 - 5.30; Thurs + Fri 10 - 6; Sat 10 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, Brit, gn, STO) 041 331 1215

■ **Future Shock**, 89 Byres Rd, Partick, Glasgow G11. Mon - Sat 10 - 6; Sun 1 - 5. (imp, back, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, m/o, STO, SF & horror gn & hbk, film bks & mags, artwork, jewellery) 041 339 8184

■ **Paul's Comics**, The Barras Market, Glasgow. Sat & Sun 8.30 - 4.30. (imp, back, ind, STO, m/o: PO Box 932, Glasgow G21 1YY, sae + want list) Mon-Fri: 041 557 1186

■ **Plan 9 Comics**, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB1 1NE. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30 (Thurs till 8), Sun 1 - 5. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, m/o: send wants, RPG specialist, board games, figures, STO) 0224 624467

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ **Talisman Comics**, 47 Winetavern Street, Belfast BT1 1JQ Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 0232-438 744

CHANNEL ISLANDS

■ **Music & Video Exchange**, 11a La Motte Street, St Helier, Jersey. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00 (back, ind, Brit, u/g, records, videos, hi-fi, m/o -- wants lists preferred) 0534 36606

■ **Trick or Treat**, 15 Esplanade, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3QA Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, French, u/g, gn, STO, fantasy film & tv mags, m/o -- send wants lists) 0534 67429

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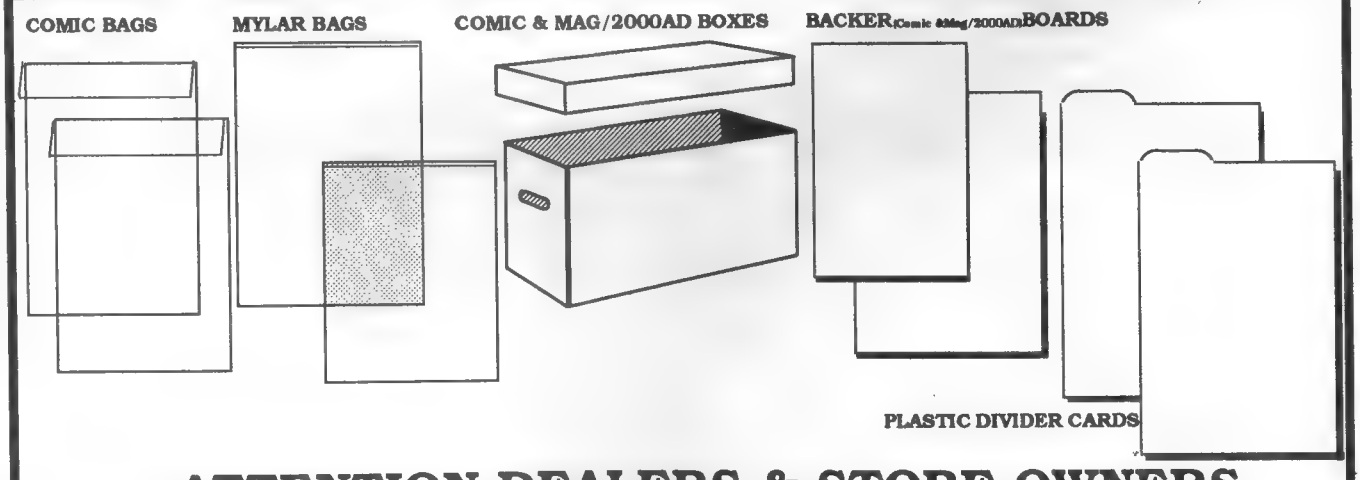

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CRITICAL ERROR

1	NM	1.55

CYBERPUNK

1	NM	3.50
2	NM	1.95

CYBERPUNK SERAPHIM FILES

1	NM	1.95

DARK HORSE COMICS

1	NM	1.55

DARK HORSE PRESENTS

2	NM	6.25
3	NM	4.95
4	NM	5.75
5	NM	5.50
6	NM	5.25
7	NM	2.50
8	NM	4.50
9	NM	2.50
10	NM	4.25
11	NM	2.50
12	NM	4.25
13	NM	2.50
14	NM	3.25
15	NM	1.25
16	NM	4.25
18	NM	2.50
19	NM	2.50
21	NM	2.25
22	NM	2.25
23	NM	1.50
24	NM	11.50
25	NM	1.50
26	NM	1.50
27	NM	1.50
28	NM	3.95
29	NM	1.50
30	NM	1.50
31	NM	1.50
32	NM	5.50
33	NM	1.50
34	NM	4.50
35	NM	4.50
35	VFN	3.25
36	NM	6.95
37	NM	1.50
38	NM	1.50
39	NM	1.50
41	NM	1.50
42	NM	1.50
43	NM	1.50
44	NM	1.50
45	NM	1.50
46	NM	1.50
47	NM	1.50
48	NM	1.50
49	NM	1.50
52	NM	1.50
53	NM	1.50
54	NM	2.75
56	NM	2.75
57	NM	2.25
58	NM	1.50
59	NM	1.50
60	NM	1.45
61	NM	1.45
63	NM	1.45

DARK HORSE PRESENTS ALIEN

1	NM	2.95

DARK SHADOWS V2

1	NM	35.00
33	VG+	5.25

DARK SHADOWS V3

1	NM	1.95
2	NM	1.55

DARK WOLF V1

2	NM-	1.45

DARKWING DUCK MINI

1	NM	1.00
2	NM	1.00
3	NM	1.00

DEADFACE WITH BACCHUS

1	NM	1.75
2	NM	1.75
3	NM	1.75

DEADFACE: EARTH,WATER,AIR AND FIRE

1	NM	1.55

DEADLINE US

1	NM	5.95

DEATH'S HEAD II MINI

1	NM	3.95
1	NM	1.25
	2ND PRINTING	
2	NM	1.15
	2ND PRINTING	

DEATH'S HEAD V1

1	NM	6.95

DEATHLOK

2	NM	1.95
3	NM	1.95
4	NM	1.95
5	NM	1.95
6	NM	1.25
7	NM	1.25
8	NM	1.25
9	NM	1.25
10	NM	1.25
11	NM	1.15
12	NM	1.15
13	NM	1.15
14	NM	1.15
15	NM	1.10
16	NM	1.10

DEATHLOK MINI

2	NM	5.50
3	NM	5.50
4	NM	5.50

DIMENSION X

1	NM	2.20

DISNEY ADVENTURES DIGEST SPECIAL

1	NM	1.25

DISNEY ADVENTURES DIGEST V1

1	NM	1.25
2	NM	1.25
3	NM	1.25
5	NM	1.25
8	NM	1.25
12	NM	1.25

DISNEY COLOSSAL COMICS

5	NM	1.20
6	NM	1.20

DONALD DUCK ADVENTURES V2

14	NM	1.25
15	NM	1.25
16	NM	1.25
17	NM	1.25
19	NM	1.25
22	NM	1.25
26	NM	1.00
27	NM	.95
29	NM	.95

DREADSTAR

1	NM	1.95
2	NM	1.50
3	NM	1.25
4	NM	1.25
5	NM	1.25
6	NM	.95
7	NM	.95
8	NM	.95
9	NM	.95
10	NM	.95
11	NM	.95
12	NM	.95
13	NM	.95
14	NM	.95
15	NM	.95
18	NM	.95
19	NM	.95
20	NM	.95
21	NM	.95
23	NM	.95
24	NM-	.90
26	NM	.95
28	NM	.95
29	NM-	.90
30	NM	.95
31	NM	.95
32	NM	.95
33	NM	.95
34	NM	.95
35	NM	.95
36	NM	.95
37	NM	.95
38	NM	.95
54	NM	1.25
58	NM	1.25
59	NM	1.25
60	NM	1.25
61	NM	1.25
62	NM	1.25
63	NM	1.25
64	NM	1.25

DUCK TALES THE MOVIE

1	NM	3.75

DUCK TALES V2

1	NM	3.50
10	NM	.90
11	NM	.90
13	NM-	.85
15	NM	.90
18	NM	1.00

ELEKTRA ASSASSIN

1	NM	4.95
2	NM	3.75
3	NM	2.25
5	NM	2.25
7	NM	2.25
8	NM	3.95

ELEKTRA SAGA

3	NM	5.95
4	NM	5.95

ETERNAL WARRIOR

1	NM	75.00
	GOLD EDITION	
1	NM	1.45
2	NM	1.45
3	NM	1.40
4	NM	1.40

EYEBALL KID

1	NM	1.60
2	NM	1.45

FALCON MINI

1	NM	.80
2	NM	.80
3	NM	.80
4	NM	.80

FALLEN ANGELS MINI

1	NM	1.95
2	NM	.80
3	NM	.80
4	NM	.80
5	NM	.80
6	NM	.80
7	NM	.80
8	NM	.80

FIRESTAR MINI

1	NM	1.95
3	NM	1.25
4	NM	1.25

FLAMING CARROT

1	VFN+	34.00
	1ST PRINTING	
3	NM	16.95
6	NM	11.50
18	NM	2.50
22	NM	1.50
25	NM	1.50
26	NM	1.50

FLAXEN

1	NM	1.85

FOOLKILLER MINI

1	NM	1.95
2	NM	1.25
3	NM	1.25
4	NM	1.25
5	NM	1.25
6	NM	1.25
7	NM	1.25
8	NM	1.95

FORBIDDEN PLANET

1	NM	1.60
2	NM	1.65

FREDDYS DEAD

2	NM	1.50

GATEWAY TO HORROR

1	NM	1.25

GHOST RIDER V2

1	NM	14.95
3	NM	7.95
4	NM	13.95
5	NM	13.95
6	NM	5.95
7	NM	3.25
8	NM	3.25
9	NM	3.25
10	NM	3.25
11	NM	1.90
12	NM	1.90
13	NM	1.90
15	NM	5.95
18	NM	1.15
20	NM	1.15
21	NM	1.15
22	NM	1.15
23	NM	1.15
24	NM	1.25
25	NM	1.95
26	NM	4.95
28	NM	4.95
29	NM	1.10
30	NM	1.10

GIVE ME LIBERTY

1	NM	4.50
2	NM	2.50
3	NM	2.50
4	NM	2.50

GOOFY ADVENTURES

1	NM	2.95
3	NM	.90
5	NM	.90
11	NM	.90
12	NM	.90
13	NM	.90
15	NM	.90
17	NM	1.00

GRENDEL V2

1	NM	1.95
	2ND PRINTING	
3	NM	1.50
6	NM	1.50
8	NM	1.50
10	NM	1.50
11	NM	1.50
12	NM	1.50
13	NM	1.50
14	NM	1.50
15	NM	1.50
16	NM	3.50
17	NM	1.95
18	NM	1.95
19	NM	1.95
20	NM	1.50
21	NM	1.50
22	NM	1.50
23	NM	1.50
24	NM	1.50
25	NM	1.50
26	NM	1.50
27	NM	1.50
28	NM	1.50
29	NM	1.50
30	NM	1.50
31	NM	1.50
32	NM	1.50
33	NM	1.50
34	NM	1.50
35	NM	1.50
36	NM	1.50
37	NM	1.50
38	NM	1.50
39	NM	1.50

GRENDEL: WAR CHILD

1	NM	1.55
1	NM	1.55

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

2	NM	3.50
6	NM	2.50
10	NM	1.95
13	NM	3.50
14	NM	3.50
15	NM	1.35
16	NM	1.35
17	NM	.80
18	NM	.80
19	NM	.80
20	NM	.80
21	NM	.80
22	NM	.80
23	NM	.80
24	NM	1.95
25	NM	3.95
26	NM	.80
27	NM	.80
28	NM	.80
29	NM	.80

HARBINGER

8	NM	1.65
9	NM	1.60

HARD LOOKS

1	NM	1.50
2	NM	1.65

HARDBOILED

1	NM	4.50
2	NM	4.50

HAWKEYE MINI

2	NM	1.25
3	NM	1.25
4	NM	1.25

HEARTS OF DARKNESS

1	NM	2.95

HELLRAISER

1	NM	3.50
2	NM	3.50
3	NM	3.50
9	NM	3.95
10	NM	2.75
11	NM	2.75
12	NM	2.80

HELLRAISER BOOK OF THE DAMNED

1	NM	2.95
2	NM	3.10

HELLS ANGELS

3	NM	1.10

HERCULES MINI V1

1	NM	.90
2	NM	.90
3	NM	.90
4	NM	.90

HERCULES MINI V2

1	NM	.80
2	NM	.80
3	NM	.80
4	NM	.80

HERO ALLIANCE QUARTERLY

4	NM	1.75

HERO ALLIANCE V2

1	NM	5.75
3	NM	1.75
14	NM	1.50

HERO FOR HIRE (POWER MAN)

2	NM	8.25
3	NM	8.25
4	NM	8.25
4	VFN-	5.75
5	NM	8.25
5	VFN+	7.25
6	VFN-	2.95
7	NM	4.25
8	NM	4.25
9	VFN	3.25
15	VFN-	1.90

INDIANA JONES ATLANTIS

1	NM	1.75
3	NM	1.75
4	NM	1.75

INFINITY GAUNTLET

1	NM	3.95
2	NM	2.95
3	NM	1.95
4	NM	1.95
5	NM	1.65
6	NM	1.65

INFINITY WAR

1	NM	1.55
2	NM	1.55
3	NM	1.55
4	NM	1.55
5	NM	1.55

INNOVATION SUMMER FUN

1	NM	2.25

INSANE

1	VFN+	1.95
2	NM	1.50

INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE

1	NM	1.60
3	NM	1.60

IRON FIST

1	VFN-	11.95
1	VG+	7.50
4	VFN+	5.25
4	VFN-	4.00
5	VFN	4.25
5	VFN-	4.00
6	VFN+	3.95
7	VFN+	3.95
7	FN-	2.50
15	FN-	8.75

IRONHAND OF ALMURIC

1	NM	1.40
4	NM	1.50

JUNIOR CARROT PATROL

1	NM	1.25

JUNIOR WOODCHUCKS

1	NM	.90
4	NM	.90

JUSTICE MACHINE V3

7	NM-	.95
	SLT WARPED	

KINGS OF THE NIGHT

1	NM	1.50

KITTY PRYDE & WOLVERINE

1	NM	5.75
2	NM	3.50
3	NM	3.50
4	NM-	3.30
5	NM	5.75
6	NM-	7.75

KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON V1

1	NM	3.50
4	NM	.80
5	NM	.80
6	NM	.80
8	NM	.80
9	NM	.80
10	NM	.80
11	NM	.80
12	NM	.80
15	NM	.95
16	NM	.95
17	NM	.95
18	NM	.95

KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON V2

1	NM	1.10
2	NM	1.10
3	NM	1.10

LIBBY ELLIS

2	NM	1.25
2	VFN	.90
3	NM	1.25
3	VFN	.90

LIBERATOR

1	NM	1.25
1	VFN	.90
3	NM	1.25

LIGHT FANTASTIC

1	NM	1.60

LITTLE MERMAID

1	NM	.95
3	NM	1.00

LONGSHOT MINI

1	VFN+	10.50
3	NM	8.95
5	NM	8.95
6	NM	10.95

LOST IN SPACE

1	NM	2.50
2	NM	1.65
3	NM	1.65
5	NM	1.65
6	NM	1.60
7	NM	1.65
8	NM	1.55
9	NM	1.65

LOST IN SPACE ANNUAL

1	NM	1.90

LOST IN SPACE SPECIAL EDITION

1	NM	2.95
2	NM	1.55

LUTHER ARKWRIGHT REPRINTS

3	NM	1.25
4	NM	1.25
5	NM	1.25
7	NM	1.25
8	NM	1.25

MACHINE MAN MINI

1	NM	1.95
2	NM	1.95
3	NM	1.75
4	NM	1.75

MAGIK

1	NM	3.50
2	NM	3.50
3	NM	3.50
4	NM	6.75

MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER V2

0	NM	95.00
	WITH T/C	
0	NM	70.00
	WITHOUT T/C	
1	NM	9.95
2	NM	5.95
3	NM	4.50
4	NM	4.50
5	NM	6.95
6	NM	4.95
7	NM	4.95
8	NM	3.95
9	NM	2.95
10	NM	2.95
12	NM	3.95
14	NM	1.45
15	NM	1.45
16	NM	1.45
17	NM	1.40
18	NM	1.40

MAGNUS ROBOT REPRINTS V1

1	NM	1.95
2	NM	1.75
3	NM	1.75
4	NM	1.75

MARK, THE

2	NM	1.25
6	NM	.95

MARSHAL LAW

1	NM	6.95
2	NM	5.95
3	NM	4.95
4	NM	4.95
5	NM	4.95
6	NM	4.95

MARSHAL LAW SUPER BABYLON

1	NM	2.95

MARSHAL LAW TAKES MANHATTAN

1	NM	3.50

MASK, THE

0	NM	1.95
4	NM	1.65

MASTER OF RAMPLING GATE

1	NM	4.50

MAZE AGENCY

2	NM	1.50
16	NM	1.25
17	NM	1.25

MECHA

3	NM	1.25
4	NM	1.25
5	NM	1.25
6	NM	1.25

MELTDOWN, HAVOK AND WOLVERINE

1	NM	4.50
2	NM	3.50
3	NM	3.50
4	NM	3.50

MEPHISTO VS FOUR HEROES

1	NM	1.50
2	NM	1.25
3	NM	1.25
4	NM	1.25

MICKEY MOUSE ADVENTURES

4	NM	1.25
6	NM	1.25
7	NM	1.25
8	NM	1.25
11	NM	1.25
12	NM	1.25
15	NM	1.25
16	NM	1.25
18	NM	1.25

MORBIUS

1	NM	1.70
2	NM	1.10

MOTORMOUTH

1	NM	1.15
2	NM	1.15
3	NM	1.15

MR. MONSTER V2

1	NM	1.95
2	NM	1.95
3	NM	1.95
4	NM	1.95
5	NM	1.95
7	NM-	1.90
8	NM	2.95

MUMMY, THE INNOVATION

1	NM	1.50
3	NM	1.50

NAMOR THE SUB-MARINER

1	NM	4.95
2	NM	2.50
3	NM	2.50
4	NM	1.25
5	NM	1.25
6	NM	1.25
7	NM	1.25
8	NM	1.25
9	NM	1.25
10	NM	1.25
11	NM	1.25
12	NM	1.25
13	NM	.95
14	NM	.95
15	NM	.95
16	NM	.95
17	NM	.95
18	NM	.95
19	NM	.95
20	NM	.95
21	NM	.95
22	NM	.95
23	NM	.95
24	NM	.95
25	NM	.95
27	NM	.95
28	NM	.80
29	NM	.80
30	NM	.80
31	NM	.80

NEON CITY : AFTER THE FALL

1	NM	1.55

NEW WARRIORS

1	VFN+	11.95
2	VFN	5.75
3	NM-	5.75
4	NM-	5.75
5	NM-	5.75
6	NM-	3.75
7	NM-	3.75
8	VFN-	3.05
9	NM	4.50
12	NM-	1.70
13	NM	1.75
14	NM	1.75
15	NM	1.25
16	NM	1.25
17	NM	1.25
18	NM	1.25
19	NM	1.25
20	NM	1.65
21	NM	.95
22	NM	.95
23	NM	.95
25	NM	1.75
26	NM	.80
27	NM	.80

NEXT MEN

0	NM	4.95
2	NM	1.95
3	NM	1.75
4	NM	1.75

NEXUS

3	NM	3.95
11	NM	1.25
13	NM	1.25
17	NM	1.25
23	NM	1.25
24	NM	1.25
25	NM	1.25
26	NM	1.25
27	NM	1.25
28	NM	1.25
29	NM	1.25
30	NM	1.25
31	NM	1.25
32	NM	1.25
37	NM	1.25
39	NM	1.25
40	NM	1.25
41	NM	1.25
42	NM	1.25
43	NM	1.25
44	NM	1.25
46	NM	1.75
49	NM	1.75
52	NM	1.50
53	NM	1.50
54	NM	1.50
55	NM	1.50
56	NM	1.50
57	NM	1.50
58	NM	1.50
59	NM	1.50
60	NM	1.50
61	NM	1.50
62	NM	1.50
63	NM	1.50
64	NM	1.50
65	NM	1.50
66	NM	1.50
67	NM	1.50
68	NM	1.50
69	NM	1.50
71	NM	1.50
72	NM	1.50
73	NM	1.50
74	NM	1.50
75	NM	1.50
76	NM	1.50
77	NM	1.50
78	NM	1.50
79	NM	1.50

NEXUS LEGENDS

9	NM-	1.15
11	NM	1.25
13	NM-	1.15
15	NM	1.25
17	NM	1.25
18	NM	1.25
19	NM	1.25
20	NM	1.25
21	NM	1.25
22	NM	1.25

NEXUS MAGAZINE

3	NM	7.95
3	FN-	4.50

NEXUS: THE ORIGIN

1	NM	2.45
1	NM	2.45

NIGHTCRAWLER

1	NM	1.75
2	NM	1.25
3	NM	1.25
4	NM	1.25

NIGHTMARE

1	NM	1.25

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

1	NM	1.95
2	NM	1.75
5	NM	1.65

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET BEGINS

1	NM	1.65

NINA'S ALL TIME COLLECTOR CLASSIC COMICS

1	NM	1.40

NOMAD MINI

1	NM	.90
2	NM	.90
3	NM	.90
4	NM	.90

NOSFERATU

1	NM	2.50

ON A PALE HORSE

1	NM	3.50
2	NM	3.10

OUTLANDERS

0	NM	1.50
33	NM	1.65

PETER PAN DISNEY EDITION

1	NM	3.95

PLANET OF TERROR

1	NM	1.25

PREDATOR BIG GAME

3	NM	1.95
4	NM	1.95

PREDATOR BLOODY SANDS

1	NM	1.75
2	NM	1.75

PREDATOR COLD WAR

1	NM	2.50
2	NM	1.95
3	NM	1.95
4	NM	1.95

PREDATOR MINI V1

1	NM	18.95
1	VFN+	16.50
	1ST PRINTING	
2	NM	9.95
3	NM	6.95
4	NM	4.95

PSYCHO, ALFRED HITCHCOCK

2	NM	1.60
3	NM	1.55

PUNISHER MINI

1	NM	36.00

PUNISHER WAR ZONE

1	NM	1.95
2	NM	1.75
3	NM	1.15
4	NM	1.15
5	NM	1.15
6	NM	1.10
7	NM	1.15

QUANTUM LEAP SPECIAL EDITION

1	NM	1.55

RACE OF SCORPIONS

3	NM	1.50
4	NM	1.50

RACE OF SCORPIONS MINI

1	NM	1.75
2	NM	1.75
3	NM	1.75
4	NM	1.75

RAI

1	NM	5.95
2	NM	2.50
5	NM	1.75
6	NM	1.75
7	NM	1.45
8	NM	1.45

RESCUERS DOWN UNDER, THE

1	NM	1.95

ROACHMILL V2

6	NM-	1.70
8	NM	1.75
10	NM	1.75

ROBOCOP VERSUS TERMINATOR

1	NM	1.55

ROCKET MAN

1	NM	1.75
4	NM	1.65

ROCKETEER MOVIE ADAPTION

1	NM	3.95

ROGER RABBIT

8	NM	.90
15	NM	.90
17	NM-	.85

ROGER RABBIT'S TOONTOWN

5	NM	1.25

SAVAGE DRAGON

1	NM	1.95

SCARAMOUCH

1	NM	1.50

SEBASTIAN MINI

1	NM	1.00
2	NM	.95

SECRET OF THE SALAMANDER

1	NM	1.95

SECRET WARS I

2	NM	1.25
3	NM	1.25
4	NM	1.25
5	NM	1.25
6	NM	1.25
7	NM	1.25
8	NM	6.50
9	NM	1.25
10	NM	1.25
10	VFN+	1.10
11	NM-	1.15
12	NM	1.25

SECRET WARS II

1	NM	1.25
1	NM-	1.15
2	FN+	.50

SERAPHIM

1	NM	1.75

SHADOW OF THE TORTURER

1	NM	1.75
2	NM	1.65

SHADOWHAWK

1	NM	1.55

SHADOWMAN

3	NM	1.75
4	NM	1.75
5	NM	1.65
6	NM	1.65
7	NM	1.55

SILVER SURFER V1

1	NM-	215.00
1	VFN+	175.00
	BK COVER CRS	
1	VFN+	165.00
	SLT BROWNING	
1	VFN	100.00
1	FN+	96.00
2	NM-	80.00
2	VFN+	60.00
	SLT BROWNING	
2	VFN	39.00
2	VFN-	37.00
3	VFN	32.00
3	VFN-	31.00
4	VFN+	205.00
5	VFN	24.95
6	VFN	24.95
6	VFN-	23.95
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REVIEWS

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Review codes: *General competitive performance of a title is measured on a scale of 1 to 10. A specific issue's quality, as measured against previous issues: <- - -> to <+ + +>.*

Two ratings are used for the sake of detailed and fair coverage. The number following each review (on a scale of 1 to 10) is a quality comparison with other ***similar*** *titles currently being published. We make no attempt to compare* ***Love & Rockets*** *to* ***Batman****, but review each within the context of its own genre.*

The individual issue is also rated within the confines of its previous issues. Hence a comparatively dull title may get a low number but a high rating for the specific issue reviewed (ranging from <-> to <+ + +>) if there has been a notable improvement.

Reviews Editor: *Sarah Bolesworth*

Reviewing panel: Paul Birch, Jonathan Farmer, Rol Hirst, Peter Hayward-Brewer, Mike Kitson, Danny King, Skinny Melink, Peter C. Phillips, Toby Reeve, Andy Roberts and Alan Woollcoombe

DC COMICS

Action Comics 681 <+ -> (Stern & Guice + Rodier) As always, Stern packs an enormous quantity of action and dialogue into the story. Supergirl, Helgrammite and Rampage all make appearances, and there's still time for some nice touches explaining how well Clark disguises his secret. All visualised with considerable panache. (JF) **7**

Adventures of Superman 494 <+ -> (Ordway & Grummett + Hazelwood) Superman wanders through a *What If?* scenario of little import. A truly out-of-ideas issue. (PCP) **3**

<+ -> In the aftermath of the war in Hell, Superman meets Kismet. Whether this is an hallucination or reality, Superman is shown the choices he could have made, and yearns that a force more powerful than he could have dictated his actions. (JF) **7**

Aquaman 10 <+ -> (McLaughlin & Giarrano) The Sea King resolves the ecology crisis, the Sea Devils their differences. Ho-hum! Some sub-plots carried over to future issues in what is undoubtedly the weakest issue in the run to date. (PCP) **3**

Ambush Bug Nothing Special 1 (Giffen, Fleming & Gordon + Sprouse, Wray) An out-of-work comics character seeks employment, parodying along the way all that we hold sacred, and with a multitude of known and unknown guest stars. Just buy it. (JF) **8**

Animal Man 51 <+> (Delano & Pugh) A "Mature Readers" tag has been attached to the title, coincidentally with the introduction of its new creative team. Pugh's violent, brutal artwork perfectly conveys the ugly and unpleasant script. The best issue since Morrison left. (JF) **9**

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 37 <+> (Abnett & Lanning + McNeil) Pretty woman cop becomes a bare-knuckle fighter - tutored by Batman - after her partner is killed. Emotion-drenched saga showing how vengeance can corrupt the best intentions. *Mercy* is the title - it only needs a warbling Roy Orbison soundtrack to make it perfect. (PCP) **9**

<+ -> **The Punisher**'s new writing team try their hands at Batman, and sadly bring the violence of that title with them. Enter much bloodshed, death and sharp weapons; exit anything resembling an original plot. Stay at Marvel, boys. (RH) **3**

Batman: Night Cries (hdbk. gn; Goodwin & Hampton) Batman all but takes a back seat in this worthy, if flawed attempt to address the subject of child abuse marred by a sluggish, skimpy plot and Hampton's dark, dense paintings. What *really* hurts, however, is the £14.95RRP. For that kind of money, you can get a lovely book of Picasso or Modigliani prints, and have enough change left for half a dozen or so new comics. For another 4p, you can have a copy of Steven Hawkings' **A Brief History of Time** - and I ask you, which has more substance? A rip off. (SM) **5**

Batman: Shadow of the Bat 4 <+ -> (Grant & Breyfogle) *The Last Arkham* storyline concludes with a battle against Mr Zsasz in the sewers under Arkham Asylum. A gipping finale in what's proved to be the best Batman story this year. (RH) **10**

Batman: Shadow of the Bat 5 <+> (Grant & Breyfogle) One of Batman's lesser foes returns in a self-contained anti-drugs opus told from the Black Spider's point of view in a letter to the Dark Knight. Yet another winner. (PCP) **9**

Batman: Sword of Azrael 1 (O'Neill & Quesada) Reminiscent of early **Iron Fist**, but nonetheless well told, nicely illustrated by Quesada and (computer) coloured by Lovern Kindszierski; though if truth be told, there's hardly enough room on the market for another Batman title. (SM) **7**

An agent of an ancient religious order fights his final battle, but not before passing on his crime-fighting mantle to his son. O'Neill always excels with international intrigue, and this is no exception, with able assistance from a supreme artistic team. Barbara Gordon's character is also put to excellent use. A *hot* one. (PCP) **9**

Batman 484 <+> (Moench & Grindberg + Scott) Black Mask returns, still intent on destroying the Wayne empire. Old-hat hokum, despite Trevor Scott's inks wonderfully diluting penciller Grindberg's normal Neal Adams stances. (PCP) **5**

Black Hood 9 <- -> (Wheatley & Willis + Burchett) When it began, this looked like being Impact's saving grace. Unfortunately, Wheatley has taken the book in so many different directions that nothing ever gets the chance to stick. Read as a series of one-issue stories, it is often interesting, but the lack of any continuous narrative or central cast member means that readers have little to catch hold of and inevitably many promising ideas are wasted. (RH) **4**

Deathstroke the Terminator Annual 1 (Wolfman & D. C. Weiss, Jiminez + Morrissette + various) Another entry in the (yawn!) *Eclipso* saga which does its best to avoid the issue to concentrate on the introduction of the Salvagion Army - a group of hi-tec scavengers. In that respect it succeeds. Vigilante and Nightwing guest star. (PCP) **7**

Deathstroke the Terminator 15 <+> (Wolfman & Nichols) A fine Zeck cover signals a partial return to form, though Slade's sewer friends are carbon copies of Marvel's Morlocks. Art-wise, Nichols and inker Blyberg reach new heights of individual excellence with some stunning pages. (SM) **9**

<+> Fugitive Slade Wilson seeks assistance from an exiled Cambodian princess/brothel keeper in a further bid to evade capture. He fails! Part four of *Total Chaos* revealing more of the Terminator's mysterious past. No faults to be found with the script and art. (PCP) **9**

The Demon 27 <+ -> (McDuffie & Semeiks + Smith) Etrigan the Demon runs for President, and along the way encounters a few other famous political figures, including the ubiquitous Dan Quayle. Perfectly timed political satire - I'd vote for him! (RH) **8**

Detective 649 <+> (Dixon & Lyle + Hanna) Cluemaster's daughter plays a pivotal role in his downfall, in an above average concluding chapter. But does Gotham really need another costumed vigilante? Time would tell, were The Spoiler to return. Alas, no 'phone number to register a vote! (PCP) **6**

Detective 650 <+> (Dixon & Nolan + Mitchell) Surprisingly for the 650th issue, no gimmicks or extra length features - just a straightforward story with Robin and Alfred racing against time to save innocents from a 50-year-old death trap, with Harold and Ace getting into a scrape investigating the subterranean depths of the Bat-Cave. Roy Raymond makes a guest appearance and Batman is conspicuous by his absence. As a result, it turns out to be a special 650th anyway. (PCP) **9**

Doom Patrol 58 <-> (Morrison & Phillips) Guest artist Sean Phillips recounts the story created by the paranoia and fear that dominate the mind of Cliff Steele, a mind that only exists on disk drive... Things continue to get better as Morrison races towards the conclusion of his long running **Doom Patrol** epic. (RH) **8**

Doom Patrol 59 <+ -> (Morrison & Case + Woch) The world is coming to an end, and only the Doom Patrol can save it - except that the team are in an even worse condition than the world. With Case on layouts only, the art is not as clean as it has been but it can't detract from the continually building momentum. (JF) **8**

Flash Annual 5 (Waid & Boldman, Charest + various) The work of new hotshot artist Travis Charest is an interesting mix of Art Adams and Whilce Portacio influences. Unfortunately he needs to develop his story-telling craft, as it's often very difficult to follow just what's going on in this otherwise enjoyable rogues' gallery reunion. (RH) **7**

Flash 69 <+ -> (Waid & LaRoque + Richarson) All-speed actioner picking up from events in **Green Lantern** 30, as Wally falls victim to Hector Hammond's mind-control powers. Not as complex as the **Green Lantern** episode, and suffers through the comparison. (PCP) **6**

Green Arrow 66 <+ -> (Grell & Hoberg) Superb wind-up to another crisp four-parter, with some excellent work from the much improved Hoberg, aided by John Nyberg's fine inking. (SM) **9**

<+ -> From the simple story of a man-hunt with a difference, Grell manages to create a real feeling for his characters. Always interesting and often thought-provoking, it's a pity that the artwork continues to be merely adequate. (JF) **6**

Green Lantern: Mosaic 4 <+ -> (Jones & Hamner + Aiken) While the adults in the Mosaic world spend their days watching old sitcoms, the kids get given power rings by the planet's guardian, John Stewart. The claustrophobic nature of this patchwork world offers a wonderful setting for this very strange book. (RH) **8**

Green Lantern Corps Quarterly 2 <+> (Stern & Abell + various) Another mixed bunch of GL stories lead by old-timer Alan Scott (in a return to his earlier work's glory). Scott's serial is quite intriguing, but far too short for any real story to develop. Other stories include the most ridiculous G'Nort adventure *ever* (courtesy of Marvel's Scott Lobdell) and a funny animal "tail" illustrated by Paul Gulacy. A weird collection. (RH) **7**

Green Lantern 29 <-> (Jones & Bright + Tanghal) This poor, single-issue story not only has Hal facing the terror of toy merchandising but also parodies one of the most

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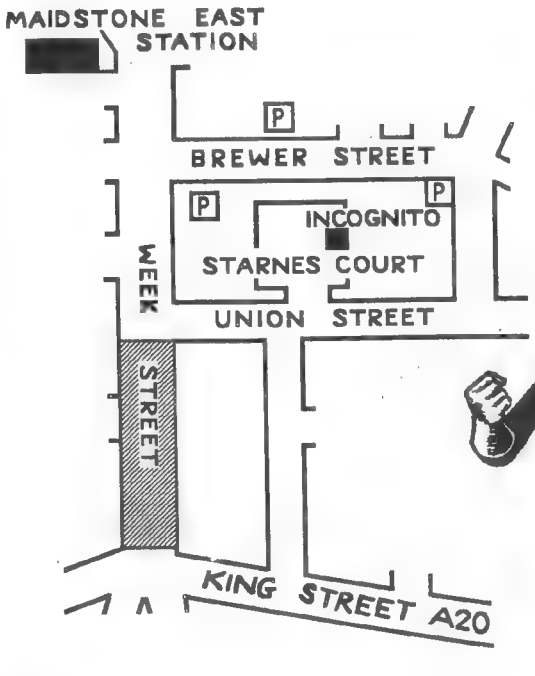

renowned pages in Lantern history... badly. (JF) 4

Green Lantern 30 <+> (Jones & Bright + Tanghal) Rebellious apes rescue Grodd from captivity in the gorilla's latest quest for world conquest. The script bounces from one scenario to the next with breakneck speed, in what is surely the best **Green Lantern** issue to date. The Flash guest stars, as does Bobo the Detective Chimp (doing an Edward G. Robinson impression with dialogue straight out of *Double Indemnity*) and Rex the Wonderdog, together with the Bureau of Amplified Animals. Don't miss this treat. (PCP) 9

Guy Gardner Reborn 3 <+ -> (Jones & Staton + Rubinstein) To anyone who has given this title a miss because of the high price tag... you haven't missed much. This final issue is a giant brawl involving Lobo, the GL Corps, the Guardians and the Qwardians, concluding with Guy getting a new ring. Definitely not worth the prestige format. (RH) 5

Hacker Files 2 <-> (Shiner & Sutton) Disappointing second issue caves in to cliches - you just know he'll somehow stop the missiles at the last minute, so what's the point? 6

Hawkworld 27 <+> (Ostrander & Duursema + Bryant) The Hawks have differing viewpoints when a racist vigilante hits Chicago. Part one of a six-episode saga which is so far of minor interest. (PCP) 5

The Heckler 1 (Giffen & Bierbaum(s) + Jones III) A wisecracking hero with a big grin and no other visible powers bursts forth amidst a group of Giffen misfits and bizarrely drawn bad guys. Fun for those who liked **Ambush Bug**, etc., but others may find the script somewhat disjointed... (RH) 7

Hellblazer 57 <-> (Ennis & Dillon) Below par issue, as Constantine investigates the weapons testing that uses the contents of desecrated graves as target material. Ennis's script nicely sets up the tale, but Dillon's art seems crude, and is certainly not his best. (JF) 6

Justice League America 66 <+> (Jurgens & Burchett) Guy Gardner's attempts to rejoin the League are monitored - and narrated - by another old-time member. Jurgens draws some nice characterisations from his cast, notably in the sequence when Superman seeks advice from the Dark Knight. (PCP) 8

<+ -> A former member of the League arrives and reveals the similarities and differences between the old and new League. Clearly not to everyone's liking, I find these new stories to be the freshest for some time, with the reservation that this issue's confrontation theme is perhaps over-used. (JF) 8

Justice League of Europe 41 <+ -> (Jones & Randall + Elliot) Jones certainly has a better handle on this book than Jurgens does on its sister title, **Justice League of America**. He manages to inject a lot of character interaction along with the fight sequences, and produces some of the most unusual bad guys in comics. The art is getting better too now, looking in places like Richard Case's excellent work from **Doom Patrol**. If you're looking for a more intelligent super-team this, of late, is where you'll find one. (RH) 7

Justice Society of America 2 <-+> (Strazewski & Parobeck + Machlan) Flash and Green Lantern unveil the new JSA HQ, and Atom and Wildcat are persuaded to rejoin, against their better judgement. Some snappy dialogue, but the adversaries to date are low-grade fare. The magic just isn't there. (PCP) 4

<+ -> Literally the oldest super-hero team alive sets up home and faces a whole gamut of problems. Looks like this could get interesting... (JF) 6

Martian Manhunter: American Secrets 1 (Jones & Barreto) Whilst Jones produces some of his most interesting work to date, it is the artwork that makes this book noteworthy. Elegantly capturing the feel of the era, Barreto once again provides a feast for the eyes in this stylish and detailed artwork. (JF) 8

New Titans Annual 8 (D. C. Weiss & Wolfman + various) Eclipso takes control of Red Star and the comatose Cyborg and begins picking off the remaining Titans. Well executed super-hero fare, with Deathstroke and The Vigilante making guest appearances. (PCP) 8

New Titans 91 <+ -> (Wolfman & Grummett) Brisk, no-nonsense tale, with some of Grummett's best pencils yet. (SM) 8

Robin Annual 1 (Grant & Wagner, Lyle + Hanna) Robin matches wits with Anarchy when the latter holds Gotham to ransom with the help of an Eclipso gem. One of the better episodes using the cross-over premise as an entertaining springboard. (PCP) 8

Sandman 41 <+> (Gaiman & Thompson) Some nice inking and colouring - and even better - lettering accompany Delirium in her search for Destruction. Beginning a new story-line, *Brief Lives* takes off slowly but soon picks up some pace. Yes, a strange start set on the peak of an island mountain, with a rather interesting cameo appearance by Orpheus. (DK) 9

Sandman 42 <- -> (Gaiman & Thompson + Locke) Rather ponderous, directionless issue, stretched thin, weighted down by dialogue. No one is better than

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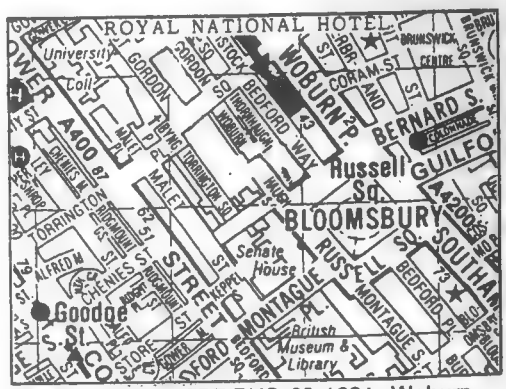

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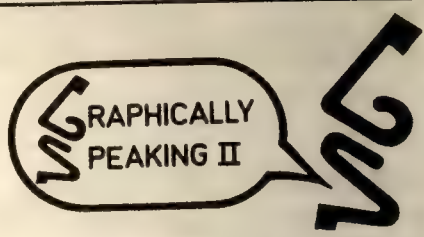

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Gaiman for self-contained, single-issue stories, but on these extended epics he never fails to slow the pace to a crawl and drag things endlessly on. (SM) **6**

<++> Subtle hues throughout set the tone for this issue, with Dream despairing over a lost love. A delightful sequence follows, depicting Dream and Delirium dining on raspberry cream-filled chocolate lovers with mango juice, omelette, salad and white wine. The **Alice in Wonderland** of comics, full of surprises, and with a constantly changing creative team. (DK) **9**

Shade the Changing Man 28 <+ -> (Milligan & Doran) Sub-standard fill-in job by Doran, though Milligan remains as sharp - and mad - as ever. Try explaining the latest Shade-Lenny-Kathy triangle to a friend: let's see, Shade's girlfriend Kathy is jealous because he's become a she and slept with a man on the first date, while Shade is in turn jealous of Kathy's relationship with her girlfriend Lenny. Got that? (SM) **9**

Superman: Man of Steel 16 <+> (L. Simonson & Bogdanove + Janke) Start of a two-part story has Superman frustrated by the law and the system in the course of his efforts to save a neighbour from her wife-beating husband. A though subject, handled with sincerity by all concerned. (PCP) **10**

Superman 71 <+ -> (Jurgens & Breeding) The Blaze Satanus saga draws to a somewhat pointless conclusion - other than the revelation of Satanus' Earth identity. Nice visuals, but the none-stop action gives little chance for any individuals to shine. (PCP) **5**

Swamp Thing 124 <+ -> (Collins & Eaton) A real team effort, with inker Kim DeMulder, colourist Tatjanna Wood and penciller Scot Eaton making this book look better than it ever did, while writer Nancy Collins continues to inject new life into an old comic. Anyone tiring of the usual banal super-hero treatments ought to take a look at what they're doing here. (SM) **9**

Team Titans 1 <+ -> (various) Havoc time for retailers yet again, with DC pushing out five differing versions of the same first issue. It's down to the customer to pick and choose between buying all five or not. Each issue features the same *Total Chaos* story-line (Wolfman & Maguire + Blyberg), in which Troia gives birth. The marketing ploy here is to produce different origin stories in each issue relating to Terra ((Wolfman & Jiminez, Perez + Vey), Nightrider (Wolfman & Netzer + Perez), Kilowat (Wolfman & Gammill + Blyberg), Mirage (Wolfman & Morrissette + Vey) and Redwing (Wolfman & Hughes + Kesel). Surprisingly, there isn't a bad origin issue between them, as Wolfman hits one of his peaks, but it's the hefty price-tag ($1.75) that hurts the pocket for completists. UKCAC draws near, and it's time for retailers and collectors to get together to let the publishers know that enough is enough with all these gimmicks and for them to concentrate on publishing quality comics for a change. (PCP) **8**

Read as "DC tries to do the X-Men". Well, value-for-money wise, this five-issue launch is much more exciting than Marvel's **X-Men** launch of last year - at least half of each issue contains a new story. But despite the presence of Maguire (and some other good artists, including Adam Hughes), the whole thing is lacking in any soul or quality. You can't empathise with any of these characters, they're just another bunch of costumes. But then again, **X-Men** fans should love it... (RH) **2**

It's good to see Maguire back on a monthly title. The central story-line is fine, but of the five different origins, Adam Hughes' *Redwing* stands head and shoulders above the rest. Of course, for the complete story, you need 'em all. (JF)

Redwing only: **8**

Wonder Woman 66 <+> (Messner-Loebs & Cullins + Campanella) Brian Bolland's excellent cover elevates this issue above the average fodder. Inside we begin a five-part story-line as Diana heads off to rescue a stranded Russian cosmonaut. A slow opening episode. (RH) **6**

MARVEL COMICS

Amazing Spider-Man 366 <+> (Michelinie & Bingham + Emberlin) In one of the best Spider-Man stories that David Michelinie has written in a long while, we see Peter Parker's reaction to the return of his parents. The explanation isn't as plausible as it could be under the circumstances, and this really *should* give Spider-Man's world the shake-up it's needed for a long time. (RH) **8**

Captain America 406 <-> (Gruenwald & Levins + Bulanadi) These bi-weekly summer six-parters are just a pretext to make more sales of course, and the way to ensure that outcome is to pack the story with useless guest-shots, including Wolverine, Cable, Wolfsbane, etc. Writer Gruenwald celebrates having written **Captain Britain** for one hundred issues this month. Sadly, a change is long overdue! (RH) **4**

Daredevil 309 <-> (Chichester & McDaniel) As the joint crawls with ninjas muscling in on the action, you have to hand it to Marvel, feeling no compunction about palming us off with yet another comic that has lost all its identity. However, ex-Kingpin Wilson Fisk's refusal to lie low must surely provide *some* intriguing McGuffins. (DK) **5**

Dr Strange 45 <+> (Thomas & Isherwood) An astral catastrophe force the Doc to face not only Death but his own past, as well. Isherwood's art has rarely looked better, and he revels in the visuals such a tale offers. (JF) **7**

Fantastic Four 368 <+ -> (Ryan & DeFalco) Ryan and DeFalco try, but what this book needs is a real shake-up, rather than the same old retreated story-lines. (Though it's good to see Agatha Harkness, again.) (SM) **6**

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Aragones) Brimming over with tales, games and a rogue's gallery of guest stars this issue wraps up the *Fountain of Youth* story. Morals galore as even Sage works up a sweat over a burning forest (DK)**10**

Hulk 397 <+> (David & Keown + Farmer) The U-foes return, more visually stunning than ever before, thanks to Dale Keown's wonderful artwork. Meanwhile, Rick Jones's newly arrived mom turns out to be a psycho - and Peter David confirms himself the best scripter in comics. (RH) **10**

Leading into issue 400, *Ghost of the Past* finds the Hulk under attack from old and long-forgotten enemies, who might just be a match for our hero and his pals. Lusciously illustrated as ever, but Keown's remaining issues are sadly numbered. (JF) **9**

Infinity War 4 <-> (Starlin & Lim + Milgrom) Marvel heroes meet, fight their evil doubles and then fight among themselves, for good measure. I can never understand badguys who want to destroy the Universe... I mean, where are they going to live? This series makes **Secret Wars** look like *high art*... (RH) **2**

<+ -> Some nice, if not entirely unpredictable story elements here, but as a whole this issue leaves you feeling that nothing important is happening. The art is uninspired and consequently unexciting. (JF) **5**

Namor 31 <+> (Byrne & Jae Lee) While Byrne's story is becoming increasingly readable it is the artwork which really shines here as Jae Lee is unleashed, assuming responsibility for all art tasks. A display of stylish, eloquent and powerful images. (JF) **8**

Punisher: War Zone 7 <+> (Dixon & Romita Jr., Janson + Manley) Recovering from his last harrowing adventure, The Punisher goes hunting in Central Park. The entire creative team has achieved its own, unstoppable momentum and seem in complete control of this violent vigilante. (JF) **8**

Shatner's Tek World 1 (Shatner & Goulart + Sullivan) Freely adapted from Shatner's novel, this story finds tough guy Jake Cardigan resurrected from a sentence of suspended animation, for some unspecified reason. Sadly, both story and art are derivative, and there's really little of immediate interest. (JF) **4**

She-Hulk 43 (Byrne) For anyone who's sick of the hype heaped on Liefeld, check out the first four pages of this comic... Byrne shows how easy it is to draw badly... but don't worry, he reverts to his own style for the rest of the issue. Hilarious and irreverent, as always. (RH) **8**

She-Hulk 44 <-> (Byrne) Little happens this time out, as the story flashes back to fill in plot details clearly required for the next issue and then proceeds at its own leisurely pace. But Byrne is still in his element, and this bodes well for things to come. (JF) **7**

Silver Surfer 62 <+ -> (Marz & Wyman + Christopher) This book could so easily be just another super-hero dummy to suck on, but in Marz's capable hands it is often - as in this instance - elevated to something much more worthwhile. This issue continues the *Herald Ordeal*, with functional art by the guest penciller. (JF) **6**

Spectacular Spider-Man 192 <+ -> (DeMatteis & Buscema) Things get weirder, as Spider-Man and the Puma fight the darkness inside themselves while in the Black Crow's spirit world. Certainly not the best thing this creative team has done, but they gain points for such an established character. (RH) **7**

Spirits of Vengeance 2 <+ -> (Mackie & Kubert + Warner) While the newest Ghost Rider lies in a catatonic state for most of the issue, it doesn't detract from the still impressive visuals. The addition of Warner, known for his gritty **Black Cross** adds a malevolent edge to an otherwise over-brutal script. (JF) **7**

Web of Spider-Man 192 <+> (Mackie & Savuik + Palmiotti) Gun-toting Betty Brant takes on the Foreigner's elite squad and learns the truth about her dead husband, Ned Leeds. Mackie has lightened up some, and he allows Spider-Man to joke a bit more. Perhaps the web-slinger himself realises just how ridiculous this story is. (RH) **6**

Wolverine 61 <+> (Hama & Texeira) Texeira's over-the-top, harsh artwork perfectly compliments Hama's continuing exploration of Logan's mysterious past. Hama is consistently providing fresh, exciting stories from what seems to be an unending source, far outstripping other mutant revelations. But just how long can it last? (JF) **8**

Wonder Man 13 <+> (Jones & Johnson + Panosian) Gerard Jones, predominantly a DC writer, shows the Marvel hacks how to handle some of the most interesting characters in their universe. The Fantastic Four, Avengers and, in particular, the Beast have not been written so well in a long time. An interesting *Infinity War* cross-over! (RH) **8**

X-Factor 82 <-> (David & Tyler + Milgrom) The script is up to par, as our team once more thrash around with the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. However, the guest artwork can be described at best as poor, and equals little of this title's usual flair. (JF) **6**

X-Force 14 <-> (Nicieza & Shoemaker + Milgrom) With little of the intensity this comic began with still remaining, it's become unexciting and flat. The plot - such as it is - is fair but slow to unravel, and in this issue accompanied by pitiful artwork. (JF) **3**

X-Men 12 <+> (Nicieza & Thibert + Panosian, Scott) Very little changes

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with the departure of Jim Lee, including the art. This retread story finds Xavier's story resurfacing with a vengeance. (JF) 6

INDEPENDENTS

Aida-Zee 1 (Nate Butler Studio; various) Butler's scripts and art are seen in Archie Comics titles, such as **Jughead**. He's gathered 50 creators including Kerry Gammill, Steve Lightle, Murphy Anderson and Dick Ayers to produce a Christian anthology title. The cover's a weird amalgam of '70s underground and Archie styles and I truly expected the colour interiors to read like Knockabout's **Old Testament** book! It's too much of a mismatch; attempting being too evangelical but still being overbearing. Cut down on the dialogue, use fewer creators and put the story *before* the message, is my advice. It's all rather camp, and I can't really envisage anyone joining the flock after seeing it. Future issues are planned with British creators who tell me it's due to improve. Sorry, chaps, but I'm afraid it will have to. (PB) 1

Archer & Armstrong 3 <+> (Valiant; Windsor-Smith & Layton) Archer and Armstrong go back on the run (after being sidetracked by the *Unity* saga). On their trail - killer nuns - in what turns out to be an hilarious issue. (RH) 9

Big Mouth 1 (Starhead; P. Moriarty & various) Harvey Pekar and Dennis Eichhorn get various artists to illustrate their stories; Moriarty does the opposite, pencilling some telling tales by the likes of the aforementioned, as well as such great indie talents as R. Crumb, Roberta Gregory and J. R. Williams, among others. The stories range from good to great, with Crumb's uncharacteristically poignant *Dad* and Tom Harrington's lamentation on the US TV puppet Howdy Doody vying for top honours. (SM) 10

Bob Dylan 1 (Revolutionary; Sanford & Blackwell) Interesting, well-researched rock bio, ruined by the fact that the Bob Dylan character never looks anything at all like Bob Dylan. Don't they have editors at these places, or are they all just out for a quick buck? (SM) 6

Cerebus the Aardvark 160 <+ -> (Aardvark Vanaheim; Sim & Gerhard) Archbishop Posey's meeting with his maker affects Cerebus deeply. Lord Julius makes a brief appearance and Punisher Roach wishes he had a spare pair of tights... On a more serious note, *Aardvark Comment* looks at the issues surrounding rape, and there are some letters on the Los Angeles riots. (DK) 9

The Cheese Heads 4 <- +> (Tragedy Strikes; Craine) *The Second Coming of Officer Jerry* presents the usual dose of surrealism, with the Cheese Heads striving to be just regular guys with everyday jobs again. Effective, chunky imagery. (DK) 8

Eternal Warrior 3 <-> (Valiant; Vanhook & Shooter + Dixon) Slow episode, where the Eternal Warrior indulges in a little light bar room brawling with his brother,

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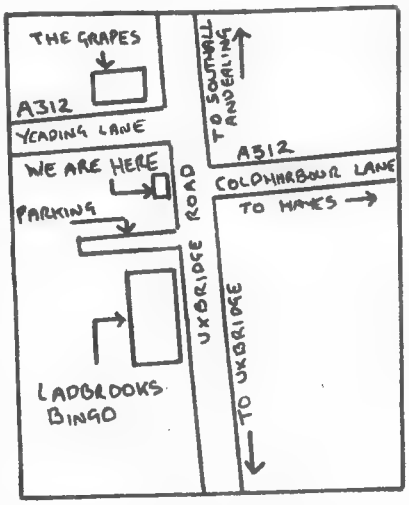

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Armstrong. All this, just to cure an attack of the blues. (RH) **5**

Femforce Up Close 2 (AC; Heike & Roberts + Ensign) Stardust's poor understanding of human emotions places her in a compromising situation which a sleaze-ball video journalist intends to capitalise on, to the full. It's almost ripped from current news headlines! More AC fun. (PCP) **8**

Femforce 51 (AC; Black & Ayers + Heike) Part two of *The Claw* story, in which Ms Victory is abducted and set to become the villain's pawn. Fun all the way, despite a well worn plot. (PCP) **7**

Good Girl Art Quarterly 8 <+> (AC; various) She-Cat joins Buckaroo Betty for a movie-lot rumpus when the time-displaced lawgirl mistakenly believes her clean-cut image is being maligned (Black & Ayers + Heike). All part of the Betty Page look-alike issue that includes a doctored *Betty as Torchy* reprint (Fox), *Phantom Lady* (Baker), *Yankee Girl* (Mayo), *Sky Girl* (Baker) and a feature on recently unearthed Sheena artwork. Plus lots of Betty Page photos. Wowzah! (PCP) **8**

Grendel: War Child 1 (Dark Horse; Wagner & McEown) Kind of proves that there's nothing really new in comics, these days. This is **Lone Wolf & Cub** in your basic post-apocalyptic environment, with standard art by McEown. Still, Wagner's done some brilliant work in the past, so it's worth sticking around for a few issues to see if this one gets going. (SM) **7**

After some absence, this title returns considerably strengthened. The Gredels are now a military elite, but one lone fighter has gone AWOL, abducting the heir to the world throne. The bright artwork is beautifully coloured and made all the richer by Wagner's inks. Violent and mysterious, the story is clearly only just beginning to get interesting. (JF) **8**

Harbinger 10 <- -> (Valiant; Lapham & Mayo) Sad to say, but if this is Valiant without Jim Shooter, I don't give it very long. The new writer is an old artist and the story he tells lacks much of the punch delivered by Shooter in the past. The characters seem to have lost a whole dimension since returning from the *Unity* saga, and this issue cries out for a more adventurous scriptwriter. (RH) **3**

Hup 4 <+ -> (Last Gasp; R. Crumb) Virtually everyone working in the alternative comics field today owes a debt to Robert Crumb, and it's good to see that after twenty five years he remains as outrageously brilliant (and offensive) as ever. (SM) **10**

The Librarian (Fantagraphics; Van Horn) Would be *Twin Peaks* type story is, in reality, just flat and featureless, with Moran's woodcut-like artwork only annoying, in the end. (SM) **5**

Magnus Robot Fighter <+ -> (Valiant; Michelinie & Ditko + Reese) Magnus smashes more robots in a routine actioner. Ditko's '50s-locked visuals don't help. (PCP) **3**

Naughty Bits 6 <+ -> (Fantagraphics; Gregory) The main story here - *Hippy Chich Gets Laid* - had me in stitches. Gregory's stories are so absurdly funny, yet so real; and with her unique, "loose" pencils style (with a nod to Jules Feiffer), she's probably the best at what she does, certainly one of the brightest lights in the "alternative" field. (SM) **10**

Next Men 5 <+> (Dark Horse; Byrne) The Next Men meet up with an old friend as the secrets of the Project begin to unfold. Likeable characters and, as always, the art (and particularly the colour) is gorgeous. (RH) **8**

Next Men 6 <-> (Dark Horse; Byrne) While Byrne's artwork rarely fails to please, his writing continues to be erratic. Here he takes an entire issue to do what a better writer would have done in a few pages - and he doesn't even do it well - there are more word balloons here than they released at the end of the Republican Convention. Boring. (SM) **5**

Real Stuff 8 <+> (Fantagraphics; Eichhorn & various) This title's been improving as it goes along, and the latest collection of autobiographical vignettes illustrated by different artists is one of the best yet, highlighted by the hilarious *The Mouse, Man!* drawn by J. R. Williams - which still made me smile after half a dozen readings. (SM) **9**

Reddevil 1 (AC; Black & Ayers + Heike) Vault heroes split their sides as Reddevil recalls an outlandish battle with the infamous Claw, back in the '40s. Trouble is, he believes the story is true. Utilising an early **Claw/Daredevil** (renamed Reddevil, for obvious reasons) episode illustrated by fledgling Jack Cole (from pre-Plastic Man days) this is so awful that it's a classic. Printed sideways, in black and white with red overlays. Continues in **Femforce** 51. A gem! (PCP) **9**

Redmask of the Rio Grand 2 & 3 (AC) During the 3-D crazy '50s, artist Frank Bolle introduced an art style simulating the effect but which did not require the special glasses. It's not 3-D in the true sense of the phrase, as these Redmask reprints attest, but nonetheless, there's no denying the stunning visuals Bolle perfected. Issue #2 also contains a Red Hawk reprint (Powell), with #3 running a Jolly Jim Dandy humour piece (Ayers). The prolific Gardner Fox provides the scripts. (PCP) **9**

Rio at Bay 1 (Dark Horse; Wildey) A teenager wins a gold nugget in a poker game, and Rio rides to the rescue when some bad guys are hired to get it back at whatever cost. Superlative Western action by one of the masters of the genre. (PCP) **9**

Solar, Man of the Atom 14 <- -> (Valiant; Vanhook & Ditko, Simpson + Autio) Another worrying post-Shooter title. It's interesting that they are obviously using Shooter's plot ideas (as indicated by tiny "Story by" credits). Unfortunately, as with **Harbinger**, they're desperately missing his scripting prowess. (RH) **4**

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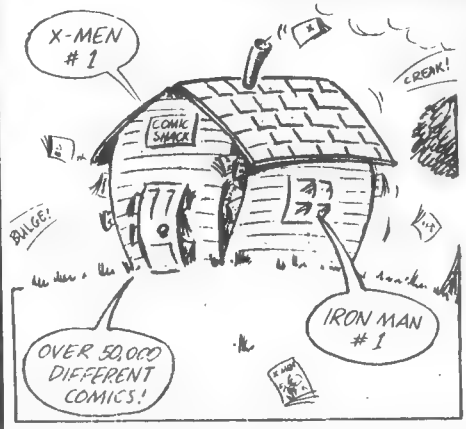

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WildC.A.T.S 1 (Image; Jim Lee) While it doesn't belong at the bottom of the cat-litter tray with the abysmal **Youngblood**, this is nevertheless a terrific disappointment. Jim Lee's plot is all over the place - and you've read it all before anyway - while his art seems rushed, and is vastly inferior to his best **X-Men** work. The problem with the Image crew seems to be that none of them (except maybe, McFarlane) can really write and they haven't even half an original idea amongst them. For addicts only. (SM) **4**

Lee is always aesthetically pleasing but, in what is becoming something of an Image trademark, the dialogue is stilted, cliched and unconvincing. For the moment though, this artist doesn't need a skilled comics writer. (JF) **7**

Young Gun 1 (AC; Severin) Charlton Comics' good-guy gunslinger Billy the Kid is given a re-airing in this lame collection of '50s reprints. Nice John Severin visuals - as expected - but mind-numbingly unimaginative plots. Each story is the same: the Kid rides into town, encounters bad guys victimising Mexican peasants and rides out of town after a shoot-out in which no one dies. A classic example of how the Comics Code Authority sanitised - and almost strangled - the industry. (PCP) **5**

UK TITLES

Helter Skelter 3 (Storm Studios; various) Simple but effective nursery title, distributed by Fleetway Editions. It features TV characters - who, as far as I'm aware - are no longer appearing, so parents with nostalgic memories of The Wombles or The Herbs may like to check this out. (PB) **5**

Overkill 9 (Marvel UK; various) A chance purchase, and a fairly entertaining read. This title initially sucked, and it's still got a long way to go, but what an improvement! (PB) **6**

Skin (Tundra; Milligan & McCarthy) The comic that no one would publish is actually a stunning, brutally honest portrait of an angry, anguished "Thalidomide baby"-cum-skinhead and his twisted, violent world. Martin 'Atchet is a compelling character, more repulsive mentally than physically - and so blinded by his own rage that he proves himself again and again to be his own worst enemy. McCarthy's pastels and panel-free pages are highly effective, and at only £3.99, this is far better value than, say, Marvel's similarly priced **Blood & Glory**, or DC's vastly over-priced **Batman: Night Cries**. Brilliant. (SM) **10**

SMALL PRESS

Apogee 4 (anthology; £1.75 from Andy McDermott, 25 St. Albans Ave., Halifax, HX3 0LZ) McDermott puts his well-observed student characters together with Pete Doree's goth musicians in an exuberant jam, plus short strips from the estimable Peter Rigg and improved Raymond Weekes - and still finds room for a couple of his own pieces. A good opportunity to sample some of the best new small press work around. (MK) **7**

More Tales from Sleaze Castle (Gratuitous Bunny; McKinnon, Wiley; £1.55 from Gratuitous Bunny Comix, c/o 33 Windsor Drive, Cleadon, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear) Currently at issue five, but I'd recommend starting at the beginning of this complex, highly amusing sf serial. Wiley's professional standard "bigfoot" art and McKinnon's literate script mesh smoothly, gradually revealing details of an obviously fully plotted story while tossing in lots of pop culture gags. If perhaps a touch too clever for its own good, it's highly entertaining. Production is at the top end of the small press quality scale, putting the material of many Stateside indies to shame. Marvel, too, come to that... (MK) **9**

Sisterson 1 (anthology; 70p from Mooncat, 11a Lyme St. (basement), Camden, London NW1 0EH) The last word in jam comics? **Sisterson** is a comic-book game of consequences, devised by the London Cartoon Centre tutors to help teach the technique of frame-to-frame continuity. The results are a lot of fun, and the idea has captured the imagination of a professionals Steve Whitaker and Donald Rooum, with Ed Hillyer and Hunt Emerson contributing to future issues. A good laugh. (MK) **7**

Superculture Classics 2 (Superculture; Savant; Atomic; 80p from Superculture Communications, 208 Camberwell Grove, London SE5 8RI) The Superculture creators seem to be the only British artists to have picked up on the high speed style of Japanese *manga*. Their "classics" line reprints their early work (of mid-Eighties vintage). It's less assured than their current stuff but it's stylish, mixing Japanese and Kirby influences, with special attention to design: the A5 cover of this one folds out into an A3 page advertising their new title. Despite the rough edges, worth checking out. (MK) **6** ●

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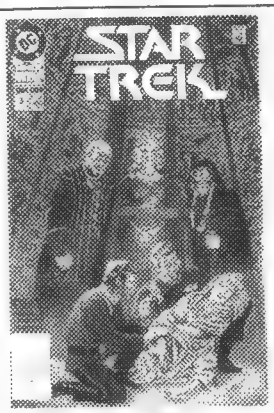

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Spirit of Profit

GHOST RIDER, Marvel's hottest gimmick book, has thrown up yet another back issue flurry of activity. Recently released #26 (the first part of an X-Men crossover) is now a £4 book, while #27, currently around £3, will be even hotter because it was generally under ordered.

Many shops reported that they sold out within hours of its release with no available reorders from distributors. This sky-rocketed the price of #27 immediately, similar to the Silver Surfer #50 order fiasco of last year. But it is not on general distribution, so we could soon see another **Amazing Spider-Man 361** phenomenon in the making.

Horror Tales

OUTSIDE OF Tundra's constantly late deliveries, worthwhile indies are thin on the ground at present. But the new interest in the horror genre has helped companies such as Rebel Studios and Northstar.

Most of Rebel's output would be sorely pressed for HM Customs and Excise approval, while Northstar (part of the new Comico banner) continues to produce popular shlock horror titles such as **Splatter**, **Slash** and **Klown Shock** (loosely based on the B-movie *Killer Klowns from Outer Space*). **Splatter 1** with Tim (**Faust**) Vigil artwork sells for well over £5, while #2 which made it, though customs is generally still at cover price. But it's #3 which seems to be the most difficult to obtain. Where it is available, like the equally rare **Slash 1**, it's rarely less than £5.

Rhymes with blimpy

WATCH OUT for the incredibly different and Liefeld-esque artwork of industry stalwart Herb Trimpe.

Aided and abetted by Steve Montano, Herb has rolled back the years with his new dynamic style currently gracing the pages of **Guardians of the Galaxy** where he has more than adequately replaced re-creator Jim Valentino on pencils.

But then Trimpe's style, albeit very similar to Liefeld's, has one major factor in its favour: Herb can draw the human figure.

Getting Punished

WE WARNED the speculators among you many moons ago to unload your **Punishers**, and it now appears that shops and dealers throughout the country are reporting a glut of Frank Castle comics.

Even the newly released **Punisher War Zone** has fallen in line with the main title, regardless of the fine penmanship of John Romita Jr, and as UK sales reach an all-time low on **Punisher War Journal**, our best advice is either unload now or watch for the **Howard the Duck** factor to take effect.

A Sharp act

X-BOOK editor Bob Harras was reported to be so impressed with Liam Sharp's renditions of the X-Men (in the Marvel UK produced **Death's Head II** and on promo illustrations) that he approved the X-Men's 4 issue crossover for the October launching **Death's Head II** ongoing series.

Many believe that Irishman Sharp could become a regular item on one of the two X-Men titles should either Andy Kubert or John Romita Jr depart sooner than later.

Co-artist on the **Death's Head II** series is Simon Coleby, who is expected to replace Sharp totally after #6.

More Valiant Efforts

DESPITE murmurs that the now Shooter-less Valiant is not producing scripts of the same quality, the comics line continues to amaze pundits with its escalating prices.

Harbinger #1 is still climbing, that is if you can actually find a copy. Our recently reported comparison between **Harbinger 1** and **Amazing Spider-Man 1** on relative scarcity prompted another dealer to comment, "There are more copies of **Amazing Spider-Man 1** for sale at this mart than I've *ever* seen of **Harbinger 1**".

America has confirmed that there were indeed only 40,000 of **Harbinger 1** ever printed, so we can expect £100 soon to be the asking price, on those rare occasions when copies actually surface.

● Making the entire series highly desirable investments, **Harbinger 6** has also become a scarce issue with several well-established major dealers admitting they can't find copies for their own collections.

For those not in the know, it was a special "death of a hero" issue, but as so few people have read it, we won't spoil things by revealing whose death.

● Amazingly, **Harbinger 10** could be Valiant's next hot book. With few dealers in this country having the spare cash to overorder, this issue featuring the first appearance of **The H.A.R.D Corps** is already a sellout and prices could escalate after **H.A.R.D Corps 1** debuts this month.

All change, yet again

MARVEL appears to have problems over who will draw what for them in the coming months. Three issues back we were given the new creative teams on the major mutant books, then two months ago there were

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some subtle changes.

Last month **Diamond Previews** highlighted the new teams, and already we have learned that this too is to change.

Joe Quesada, the brightest rising star of the new wave of artists has had to temporarily stand down from **X-Factor** while he finishes his agreed projects for DC. Apparently he is to be replaced by **Namor**'s Jae Lee.

X-Factor has always been an creative nightmare, which is probably why Marvel mutant editor Bob Harras passed the editorial reigns to Kelly Corvese, who inherits a book which has had no fewer than 26 artists work on its 80 odd issues run. And that includes stalwart Walt Simonson pencilling 20 of them!

Flashy success

WE TOLD you last issue how hot Travis Charest's **Flash Annual 5** is. Try finding one at a mart or a shop. Or in San Diego, at this year's big convention in the United States. Visiting Brits, eager to buy in bulk, found that virtually every dealer had sold out and those with copies were already charging up to $7 each.

But where they can be obtained for much much less than dealer prices? Your local newsagent, of course. **Flash Annual 5** is a distributed comic, albeit not in the same quantity as standard DC comics and is in the shops now. But don't expect them to be there for much longer.

Thibert's first!

START SEARCHING those comic shop bargain bins again. This time for **Teen Titans Spotlight** #18 starring Aqualad. To the best of our knowledge, it contains Art Thibert's first professional artwork.

Watch out for a £3 price tag on it by Christmas. As one dealer put it when seeing **X-Men #12** (Thibert's debut on pencils), "So who is this Jim Lee, anyway?"

By Neptune's Trident!

AT A recent London comic mart, some of our ITMites spotted a new attendee, a model and toy company. When handed a flyer, they were amazed to see the company's name was Neptune Distributors.

No one had the heart to tell them they should **seriously** think about changing their name as the last Neptune Distributors was made bankrupt less than a year ago following several years of ill will.

Harras Twee

CHECK OUT the back issue bins for **Rom 50**, not to buy, just to look.

Hidden away in the back it has a one page strip written and drawn by none other than Bob Harras, editor of the main X-titles.

Now, Bob's art may be nothing terribly special, but it could be argued that he would have done a better job drawing **Uncanny X-Men, X-Factor** or **X-Force** than the recent spate of poor fill-ins!

Up with posters

REMEMBER *The X-Tinction Agenda* mutant storyline? The free (to retailers) promo poster by Jim Lee and Whilce Portacio featuring Cable, Wolverine, and Archangel in

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the style of an old west "Wanted" poster is now one of the most sought-after merchandise pieces in comics.

The poster has been seen changing hands for as much as £15 in this country, and as much as $60 in the US. Shops apparently received a maximum of five posters per outlet, with many retailers exclaiming that this promo was actually better produced than Marvel's for sale poster line.

Horrific Tales

ANOTHER 1970s Marvel line could be making a comeback next year, depending on the success of the **Midnight Sons** titles.

Although it's undecided whether **Epic Comics** will be the editorial driving force behind them, Marvel's black and white magazine format horror titles such titles as **Dracula Lives, Vampire Tales, Monsters Unleashed, Haunt of Horror** and the now very scarce **Tales of the Zombie** are all being looked at for the '90s treatment.

So ask your local retailer to search in the back room for these old chestnuts, they may prove to be worth more than anyone thinks.

More expansions!

CONTINUING their expansion, Marvel has numerous proposals being viewed for next year. These include:

- **Strange Tales** by R & J L'Officier, planned as a monthly "Book of Vishanti" title, with Doctor Strange recounting mystic tales from his library.
- **WoodGod**: a 4 issue mini series which will wrap up the dusty old plot lines introduced by Bill Mantlo in the '70s for the character's solo appearance in **Marvel Premiere 31** and guest-shot in **Marvel Team-Up 53-54**. Original artist and co-creator Keith Giffen is also said to be working on it.
- Continuing the looting of Marvel's old showcase title, 4-D Man (**Marvel Premiere 35-37**) is being developed by Terry Kavanagh and Tom Morgan to bring up to date the 1950s superhero and fill in the missing 40 years.
- **Ka-Zar's** fifth attempt at being a popular comic is rumoured to be John Byrne's next revival. The project is set to run parallel with **Namor**, with Ka-Zar also head of a multinational empire.

Perhaps reflecting Marvel's own corporate growth, this series, along with **Iron Fist's** Danny Rand owning the company Rand-Meachum seems to indicate that Marvel feels there is as much righteous action in corporate takeovers as in noble slugfests!

- **Tales to Astonish** is planned as a graphic novel mini-series by James Robinson and Colin McNeill featuring characters from the 1960s title of the same name.
- **Werewolf** is set to revive the old **Werewolf by Night** title next year, featuring the continuing adventures of Jack Russell, the terrier who walks like a man.

The **Slapstick** team of Len Kaminski and James Fry will be handling the creative side.

Astro-nomical error

AS COMICS companies take on more creators and produce more titles, continuity always becomes a headache.

Fantastic Four readers are confounded by the way everyone aged until Franklin came along, while DC fans wonder how Batman and his continuity fits into the post-crisis DC universe and poor old X-fans agonize over virtually every unfinished subplot.

So check out Vance Astro, alias Marvel Boy, aka Major Victory of **Guardians of the Galaxy**. According to **Marvel Superheroes 19** (the first Guardians of the Galaxy tryout) Vance was a NASA astronaut launched into deep space and lost for 3,000 years until found by the other members of the team.

Yet 20th century Vance is currently serving 3 years in the high security supervillain penitentiary The Vault for killing his father.

Since when did NASA take convicted killers into space programmes and give them the rank of Major? Unless of course it was a "do it or rot here" mission. Or maybe they intend to send the future Vance back to stop himself from killing his father. Perhaps even Cable is really Vance Astro from a different time line?

Mass-market Moore

LOTS of creator names have been linked with the comics brat-pack at Image, but the latest rumours add a senior citizen twist to the young rebels.

Having worked for almost everyone else (including his own company), '80s comics guru Alan Moore is alleged to be joining the Image team, along with artists Steve Bissette and Rick Vietch for a new six-issue series.

Entitled **1963**, the project was recently described by an American fellow comics author as "a cap to **The Watchmen**". Current industry gossip has the outline telling of the creation of a new comics company's line of early 1960s titles, each issue featuring a different character.

Ultimately, the stories move up to contemporary times, to allow for the almost compulsary promise of cross-overs with other Image creations.

Marvel, about whom Moore has been openly critical, may well be apprehensive about how closely the title may resemble their own early years, while DC may be intrigued by the **Watchmen** quote.

Mirroring the Marvel formula

COMPLETE amazement fell over the British public during August, when **The Daily Mirror** published somewhat intrusive photos of Fergie. The resultant speedy sales led to a second edition (for the first time in over 25 years) at 11.30 that morning, and copies of the first edition changing hands for over £1.50.

While the press were amazed at the reaction of the public, the comics world wondered what all the fuss was about.

Instant reprints and hot first editions have kept Marvel and many a dealer strong for years!

The totally subjective musings of the ITMA team are personal opinions, and do not necessarily reflect those of the publication. But you already knew that, didn't you?

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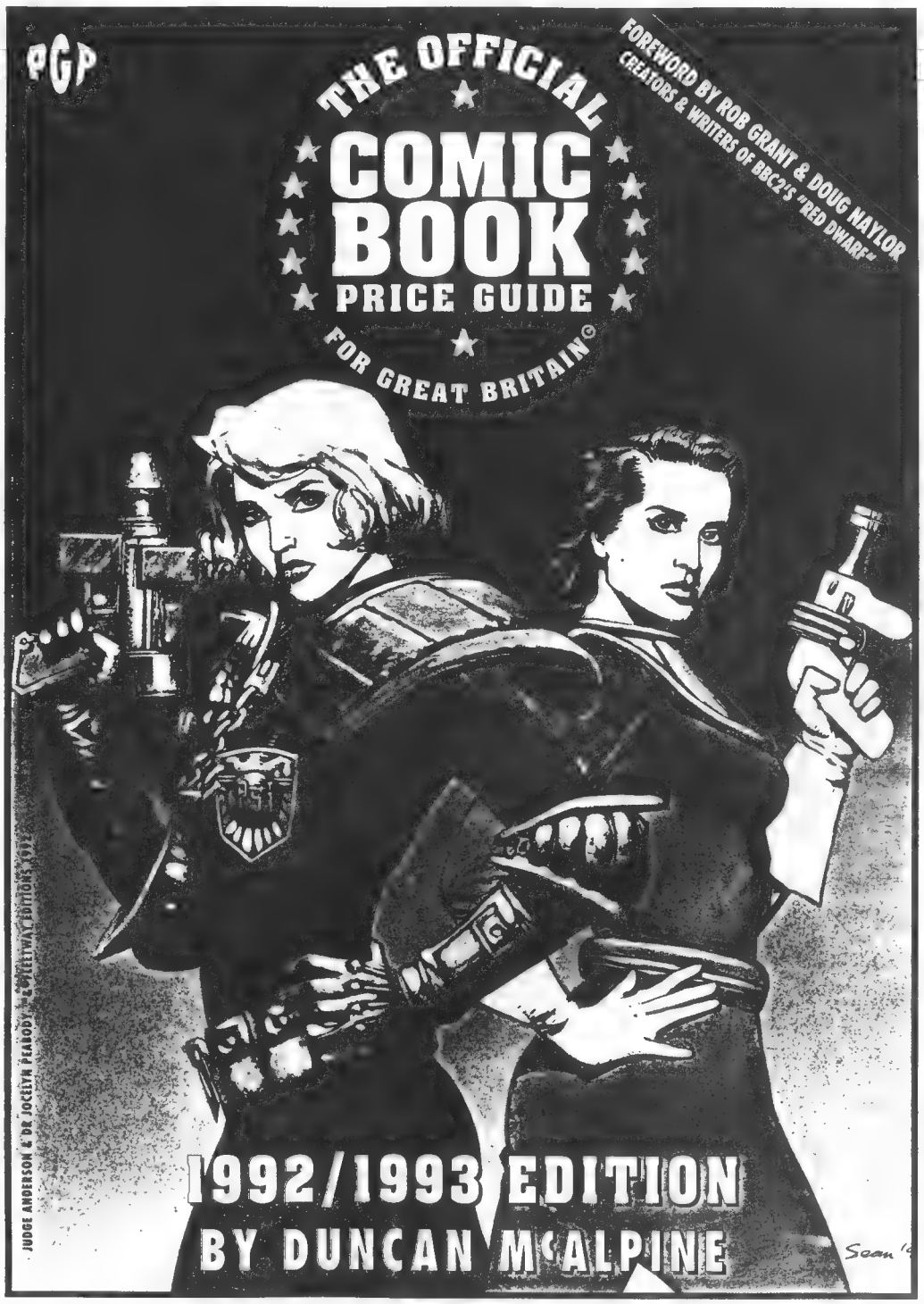

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Last issue we printed a letter from a concerned Valiant reader who had dutifully clipped out his coupons, attached his money order and sent off for his copy of ***Magnus 0****. Months passed, nothing happened. So he wrote to us.*

Since then we've received seven similar letters. We're now in direct communication with Valiant over this problem and will keep you posted. Derek G Skinn/Editor

David Lee, Amhurst Road, Hackney, London E8 2AZ

Keith Pottage's opinion (*Comment*, issue 22) basically stated that people who write for comics probably couldn't make it writing for any other medium.

A nice theory, Keith, but (takes deep breath) Grant Morrison's an award-winning playwright, Alan Grant used to script radio plays, Steve Gerber and J. M. DeMatteis are television writers, Chris Claremont and John Byrne have had novels published, Nancy A. Collins has had *good* novels published, Frank Miller has two **RoboCop** movies to his credit and Neil Gaiman has written for more media than you can shake a generalisation at. And I'm not even beginning to list the European and Japanese comics creators who write scripts, direct movies or stage plays and generally carry on in an renaissance fashion all over the place.

Incidentally, when a *proper* novelist such as Harlan Ellison tried his hand at writing a comic (**Detective 567**), the result was awful, to say the least.

It works both ways.

Guy Denning, 22 Southover Rd, High Littleton, Bristol

I am replying to the wholly objective piece of 'journalism' in last month's issue regarding the BBC Radio 4 *Money Box* programme on starting a business. In this particular instance a small publishing company.

Yes, I do have a vested interest, not only was I the subject of the radio programme but also the target from your *Media File* journalist for some bellicose abuse.

The singular point of her argument seemed to rest on the point of a half hour programme representing half an hour in the life of the business, this 'illusion' given through a series of five days recording being edited down to a thirty minute programme, or is she not aware that this is how the programme was created?

She also chose to target mine and the producers' choice of the **Dick Barton** theme for the programme as perhaps laughable. Well, radio does revolve around the use of sound -- not pictures. What perhaps would have been more appropriate to give the impression of comics to the audience -- Samuel Barbers *Adagio for Strings*?

She as a journalist should know the value of the full use of the media she uses, and frankly, to score easy points the style with which she chose to write this was easy and some would say even lazy. Also as a journalist, as I'm still assuming this is what she is, she should be fully aware of the benefits of research. A letter or a phone call to the BBC or myself, and she could have presented an even balanced, perhaps not supportive, piece that did not drip with the vitriol that her article did.

I should point out that having worked for BBC Documentary Features, Media File's *Sarah Bolesworth (now a national newspaper journalist) is quite familiar with research, production time and editing. You may have missed her point, Guy.*

Whatever your intention for the programme was, she reported on the end product as broadcast.

Comics International *supports any attempt at expansion and growth of the medium. But it is unfortunate that in this case* ***Inside Money*** *chose to do such little research of the industry and ended up broadcasting such a partisan programme with no serious editorial content.*

With regard to the use of the ***Dick Barton*** *theme, I too admit being baffled by its relevance. If you wanted a comics cliche, surely "Faster than a speeding bullet" would have been more apt. At least it's taken from a comic.*

However, as with all other new comics publishing projects, we look forward to reporting in our news column on how your magazine, ***Deisel****, progresses.* *(DGS)*

A. Shelley, 10 Berry Close, Basildon, Essex

This letter is a call to arms! **Meng & Ecker #1** has been declared obscene by a Crown Court judge. The consequences of this could be dire indeed.

The police have been given the go-ahead to now go after comics intended for adults only. All those dealers selling Tundra's **Skin** should watch out.

It is time for retailers, publishers, creators and fans to get together to fight this thing. It's no good hoping they won't find you.

Meng & Ecker publishers Savoy Books stood up for our industry and what support did they get? None. If a lawyer of such quality as Geoffrey Robertson could not save **Meng & Ecker**, who can? And who will be there when **Skin** is next? And then?

Are we just going to sit back, or are we going to fight?

Paul H. Birch, South Yardley, Birmingham

I read the letter from "Doubting" Thomas McSween (*Letters*, **Comics International 22**) about Image and who owns what, copyright-wise.

I interviewed Todd McFarlane about six weeks back, and from what I could make of it, they're more of a cooperative than a limited company in that each of the initial bunch who formed Image own their respective properties (ie. not a share of each others).

As for co-workers on a project, McFarlane said he might like to work with people like Frank Miller and Neil Gaiman, but I gather how he saw it was that they'd be working for him and he'd pay a scripting fee (I don't know about royalties), but he'd feel uneasy about it as that's the type of situation he'd left at Marvel.

He did say he'd *relieved* Ken Steacy of cover colour duties though. He'd liked the work but it wasn't mainstream enough to compete with Marvel and DC.

Having their mates work for them could well mean a number of things. They come a lot cheaper than big name creators. Working with friends creates a more harmonious working environment. Or maybe it's whose boots you lick to get a job and their friends weren't licking the right boots. Possibly they couldn't give a damn either way about these goons who they once met at a convention and are now slaving away for them. Who knows?

The prolific John Miller, Edinburgh, Scotland

Just read your latest issue in which *Media File* is a very good feature. Sarah Bolesworth is a perceptive writer and I appreciated her coverage of William (**Mad**) Gaines.

I recall one schoolboy taking a **Mad** into church (compulsory attendance) and giggling during the sermon, which I guess is the correct anti-establishment attitude.

I'd also like to thank your ITMA team (*Movers & Shakers*) for their mentioning the 1960s **House of Secrets** title. Not only did it feature Eclipso, but also the under-rated Mark Merlin by Mort Meskin.

But I beg to differ with Andrew Harvey (*Comment*, **#22**) over *"Marvel's creative void of the '70s"*. What about **Tomb of Dracula** and the wave of horror titles, as well as Moench and Gulacy's excellent **Master of Kung Fu**? I admit there was some unfashionable trash, but it wasn't a total void.

Simon Bowland, 78 Park Lane, Sandbach, Cheshire

Just to congratulate you on your latest **Comics International**. Again, a brilliant blend of news, views and reviews that makes it such an entertaining read. I am usually able to spend a good four hours absorbing the entire issue and find the *Reviews* and *Movers & Shakers* features to be those of most interest.

But you could perhaps look to expanding the page count for a slightly increased price, although you would obviously have to research the viability of such.

Right now we're happy to give you four hours of reading for 50p! We tried 96 pages but it was too bulky and needed an (expensive) glossy cover. But, as always, we welcome any other opinions. *(DGS)*

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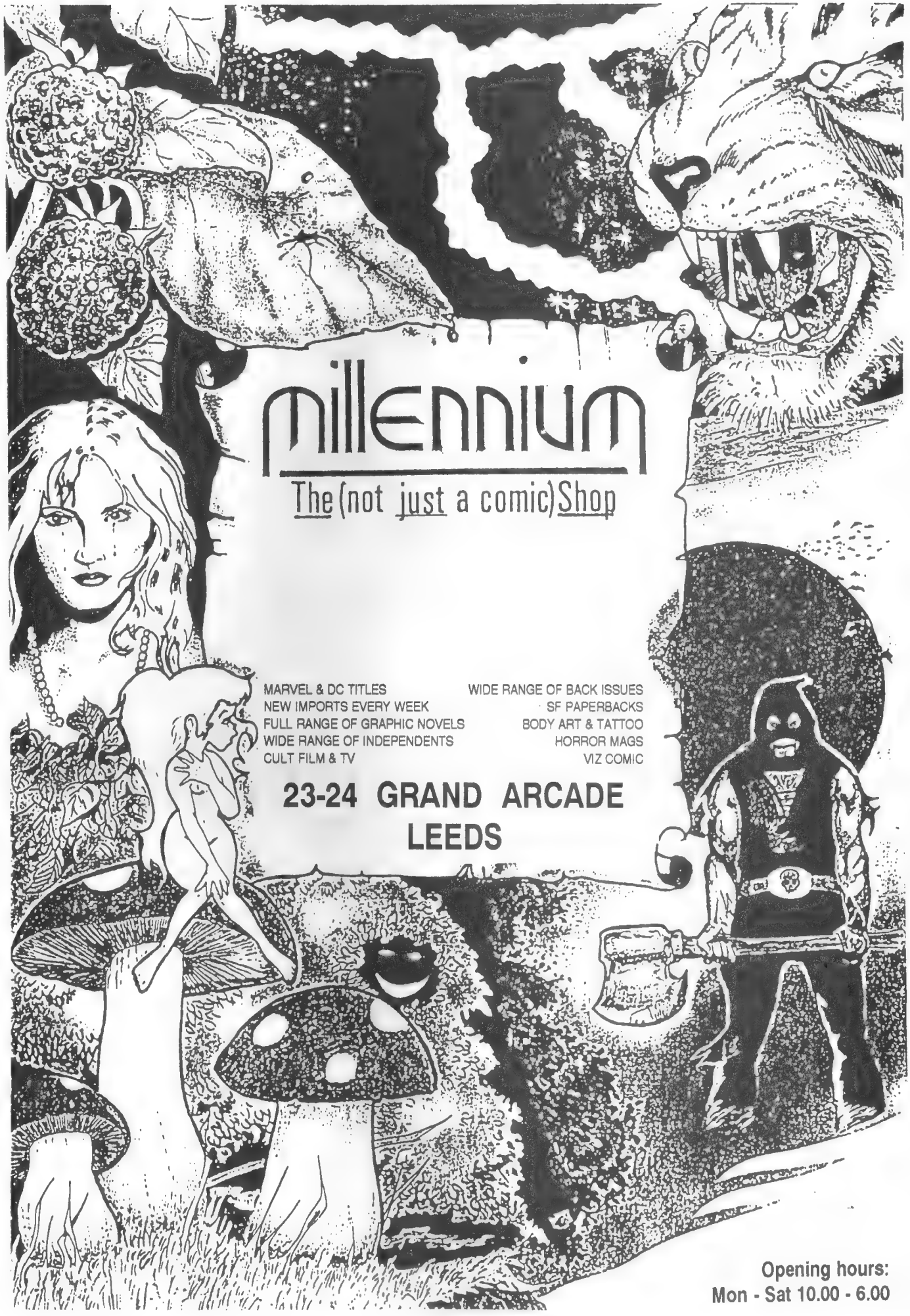
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Odds and sods! **Starburst Magazines** 2-28, 30-48, 62 (good reading). UK Marvel **Planet of the Apes** - full run (1-123) and USA Marvel **POA** 1-2 (there must be somebody out there who wants them!). UK Coronet **Peanuts** paperbacks 1-60 (only for genuine students of the philosophical). As you can see, this is a genuine loft clear-out, so no reasonable offer refused. In fact, make that *no* offer refused. Will swap for DC comics. Contact: Steve Coulson, 169 Eltham Palace Road, London SE9 5NA.

We could have that elusive issue, send for a catalogue now! For our list of Marvel, DC, independents, trade paperbacks, graphic novels, badges, models, t-shirts and more, send a large SAE to: G. Tiernan, 77 Croham Road, Croydon, Surrey.

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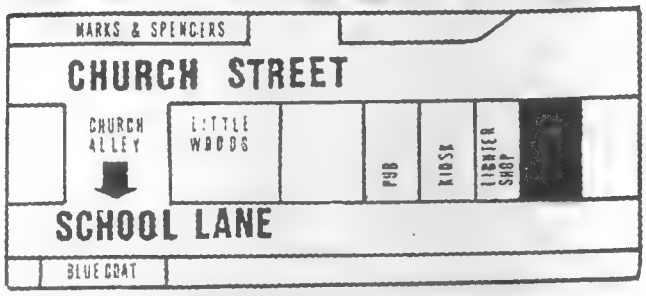

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Wanted urgently: **Judge Dredd Megazine** 4 and **Miracleman** 19. Contact: Dave Bannister, 206 Wigan Road, Standish, Wigan, Lancs WN6 0AH (0257 421194)

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EVENTS GUIDE

An at-a-glance guide, this listing gives the dates and locations of all forthcoming events advertised this issue. A free service for advertisers, the bracketed number after each entry denotes the page this issue where full details appear.

SEPTEMBER

NOW **SOLIHULL:** Strip Search 2 (until Oct 10) at Solihull Central Library, Homer Road, Solihull, West Midlands (p 10)
12/9 **MANCHESTER:** Comic Mart, Parkers Hotel, Corporation Street (p 33)
12/9 **NOTTINGHAM:** 2000AD album signing. Waterstones, Bridlesmith Gate (p 11)
18/9 **LONDON:** 2000AD album signing. Virgin Megastore, 14-16 Oxford St. (p 11)
19/9 **LONDON:** 2-day UK Comic Art Convention (19 & 20/9; with guests), Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London WC1 (p 8)
19/9 **SHEFFIELD:** Comic Mart & Film Fair, Main Hall, Sheffield Polytechnic, Howard Street, Sheffield (p 33)
26/9 **BIRMINGHAM:** 2000AD album signing at WH Smiths, Union Street (p 11)
26/9 **LEEDS:** Comic Mart, Leeds Polytechnic, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way (p 48)
27/9 **LEICESTER:** Comic Mart, YMCA, Granby Street, Leicester (p 33)

OCTOBER

3/10 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic Mart, Bluecoat Chambers Concert Hall, School Lane, Liverpool (p 76)
3/10 **MANCHESTER:** 2000AD album signing. Waterstones, St Annes Sq. (p 11)
4/10 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic Mart, Forte Crest Hotel, Lord Nelson Street (p 33)
4/10 **LONDON:** Comic Mart, T.U.C. Congress Centre, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London WC1 (p 27)
10/10 **BIRMINGHAM:** Comic Mart, Hotel Arcade, Ladywell Walk (p 30)
10/10 **NOTTINGHAM:** Comic Mart, Stakis Victoria Hotel, Milton Street (p 33)
10/10 **PLYMOUTH:** 2000AD album signing. Waterstones, New George St (p 11)
10/10 **KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES:** 2000AD signing Waterstones Thames St (p 11)
17/10 **NEWCASTLE:** Comic Mart, Blackfriars Hall, New Bridge Street (p 33)
18/10 **LONDON:** Comicbook Marketplace: Special Edition, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1 (p 54)
24/10 **BIRMINGHAM:** Comic Mart, The Midland Hotel, New Street. (p 20)
24/10 **LONDON:** Comic Fair, Central Hall, Parker Street, Westminster (p 69)
31/10 **LEEDS:** Comic Mart, Leeds Polytechnic, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way (p 48)

NOVEMBER

7/11 **LONDON:** Atlanticard 92: 1st Annual US-UK Trading Card Convention, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1 (p 15)
7/11 **SHEFFIELD:** Comic Mart, Main Hall, Sheffield Polytechnic, Howard St. (p 33)
8/11 **LONDON:** Comicbook Marketplace, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London WC1 (p 17)
14/11 **LONDON:** Comic Fair, Central Hall, Parker Street, Westminster (p 69)
14/11 **NOTTINGHAM:** Comic Mart, Stakis Victoria Hotel, Milton Street (p 33)
15/11 **LEICESTER:** Comic Mart, YMCA, Granby Street, Leicester (p 33)
21/11 **MANCHESTER:** Comic Mart, Parkers Hotel, Corporation Street (p 33)
21/11 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic Mart, Bluecoat Chambers Concert Hall, School Lane, Liverpool (p 76)
22/11 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic Mart, Forte Crest Hotel, Lord Nelson Street (p 33)
29/11 **LONDON:** Comicbook Marketplace: Special Edition, Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1 (p 54)

DECEMBER

5/12 **BIRMINGHAM:** Comic Mart, Hotel Arcade, Ladywell Walk (p 30)
5/12 **LEEDS:** Comic Mart, Leeds Polytechnic, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way (p 48)
6/12 **LONDON:** Comic Mart, T.U.C. Congress Centre, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London WC1 (p 27)
12/12 **BIRMINGHAM:** Comic Mart, The Midland Hotel, New Street (p 20)

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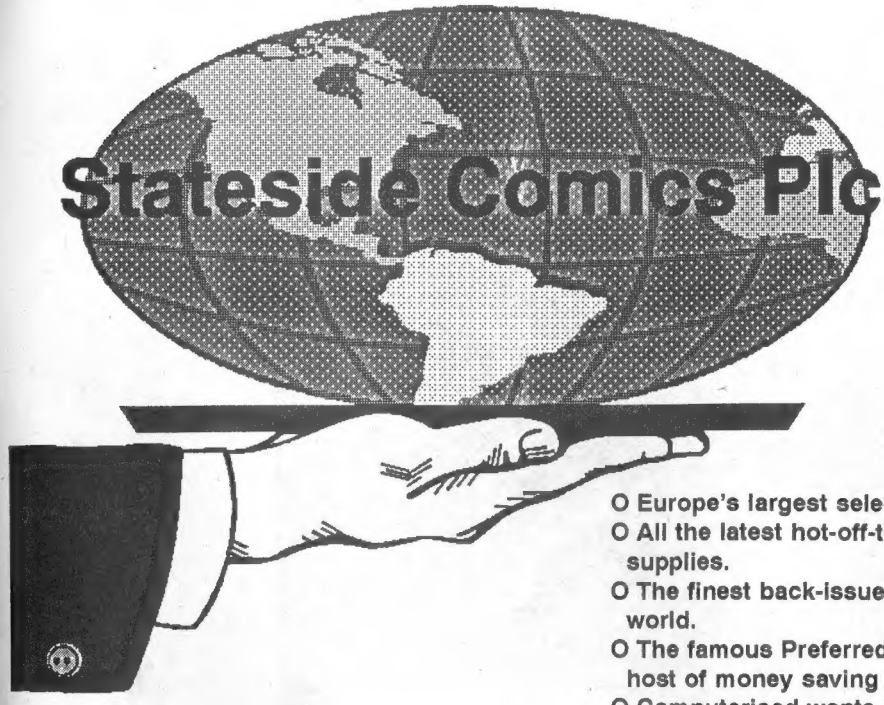

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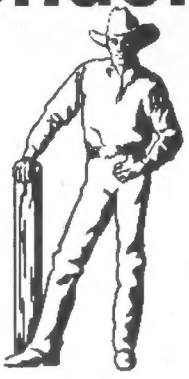

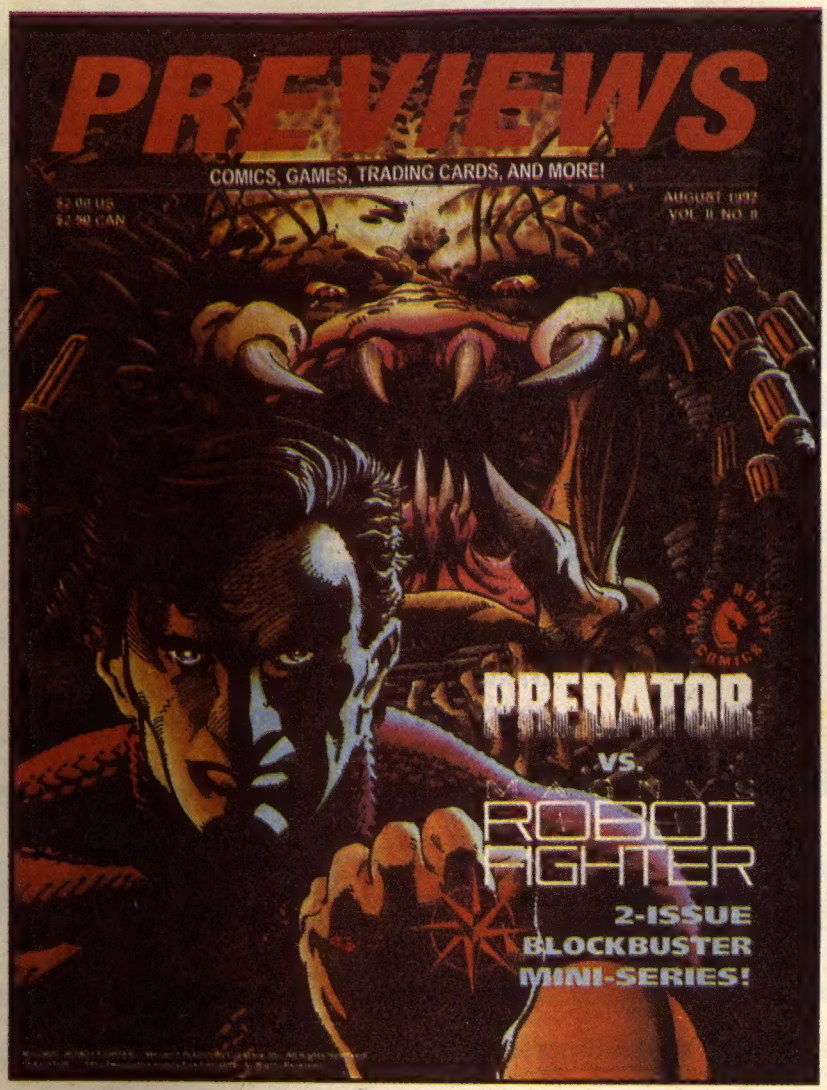

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